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CEREBUS LATER DAYS 5

IF CEREBUS STILL BE BOUND

270
SEP

AARDVARK COMMENT

Colin Longcore,
3046 NE Holladay #103
Portland, Oregon,
97232

Dear Dave,

Hello from Portland, Oregon. I hope this letter finds you in good spirits. I thought it was a poignant ending to *Going Home*. Your comments in Aardvark Comment in 266 helped close the story nicely for me.

I was curious about something though and I've become curious enough to sit down and write you this letter. On my first reading of 265 I was puzzled by the scene where Jaka loses her glove, pgs. 677-679. I kept wondering about the significance of Jaka's bare hand. Then I wrote a letter to my friend the (deaf) American artist, Joseph Grigely and I wound up writing about the first time I met you. It was in Grand Rapids, Michigan circa 1986. I remembered you talking about Michelangelo and Mick Jagger and that one time you crashed a Marvel Comics party. That got me thinking about Gene Day and then I remembered a story you told about him. I don't know how accurate all of these memories are, I'm just going with what I got. I don't remember exactly where I heard it or read it (maybe *Swords of Cerebus*, maybe that signing in Grand Rapids). Anyway the story goes that you were in the studio with Day and you were having a very hard time drawing this particular hand. You kept drawing and erasing, drawing and erasing and finally, completely frustrated, you showed the hand to Gene and asked "What's wrong with this hand? Why doesn't it look right?" And Gene said, "There's nothing wrong with it. It's a Dave Sim hand."

The focus on that hand, especially on p. 679 seems to make that story a plausible reference appropriate for the rather grim exchange taking place. It makes sense, too, because the fact that it's Jaka's hand called to mind comments you made, I think, during *Jaka's Story*. You wrote (or said by telepathy) you felt a kinship with her artistically because your current profession and her former profession were not held in very high esteem by most of society. How am I doing?

I really like panel 4 p. 677. To me, it gave a delicate and carefully portioned sense of acceptance and happiness, however brief, to the closing of *Going Home*. *Cerebus* is fantastic these days. It's why I've been sending copies to Mr. Grigely.

If any of this is pertinent, I would really enjoy it if, in one form or another, you talked about Gene Day; the importance of his influence for you, the circumstances surrounding his death and the role of his memory in your recent work—if for no other reason than to prop up my crumbling long term memory.

Good luck with *Latter Days*, sonny.

Thanks, er, uh...."Pops"?

The significance of Jaka's bare hand was that she was intending to be a mischief-maker in Sand Hills Creek, presenting herself to the first resident she encounters sans wedding ring (her way of getting even with Cerebus for springing their "marriage" on her at the last minute and for expecting her to "follow his lead" in their social interactions as Mrs. Cerebus). Might the story have taken a different direction if she had kept the glove on? But she doesn't. She always takes the glove off. She has always taken the glove off. She will always take the glove off.

The Michelangelo/Mick Jagger anecdote (for the benefit of those who weren't there) was in reference to the cover of Cerebus 86 (published in 1986—the month of my thirtieth birthday—one of the few times that the issue number matches the year in the 300 issue run: an autographed Cerebus 0 gold logo edition to the first reader who writes in with

Continued in back...

CEREBUS
NO. 270 SEPTEMBER 2001

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

GERHARD
Background
Artist/pencil & ink

CHRIS VERHOEVEN
Cover Technician

KEN SIM
Cover Photo

LATTER DAYS

•

PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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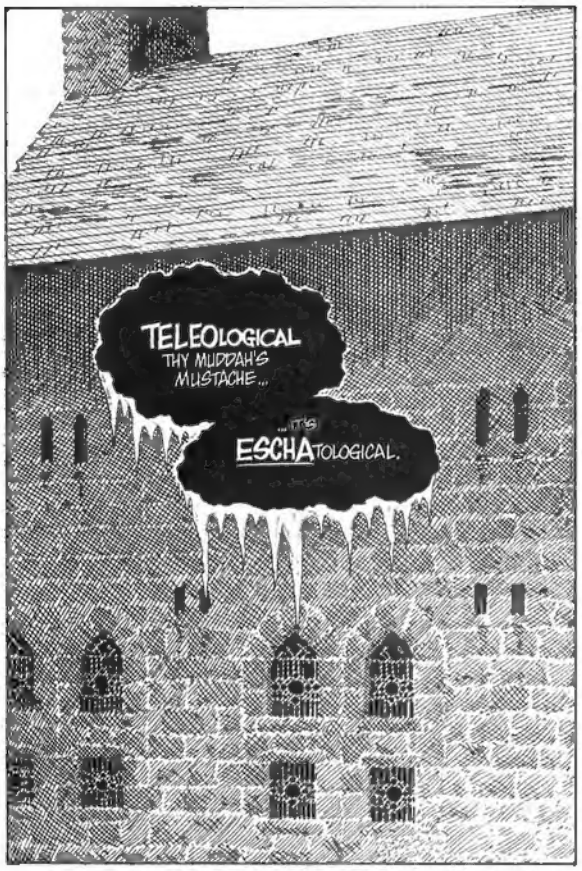
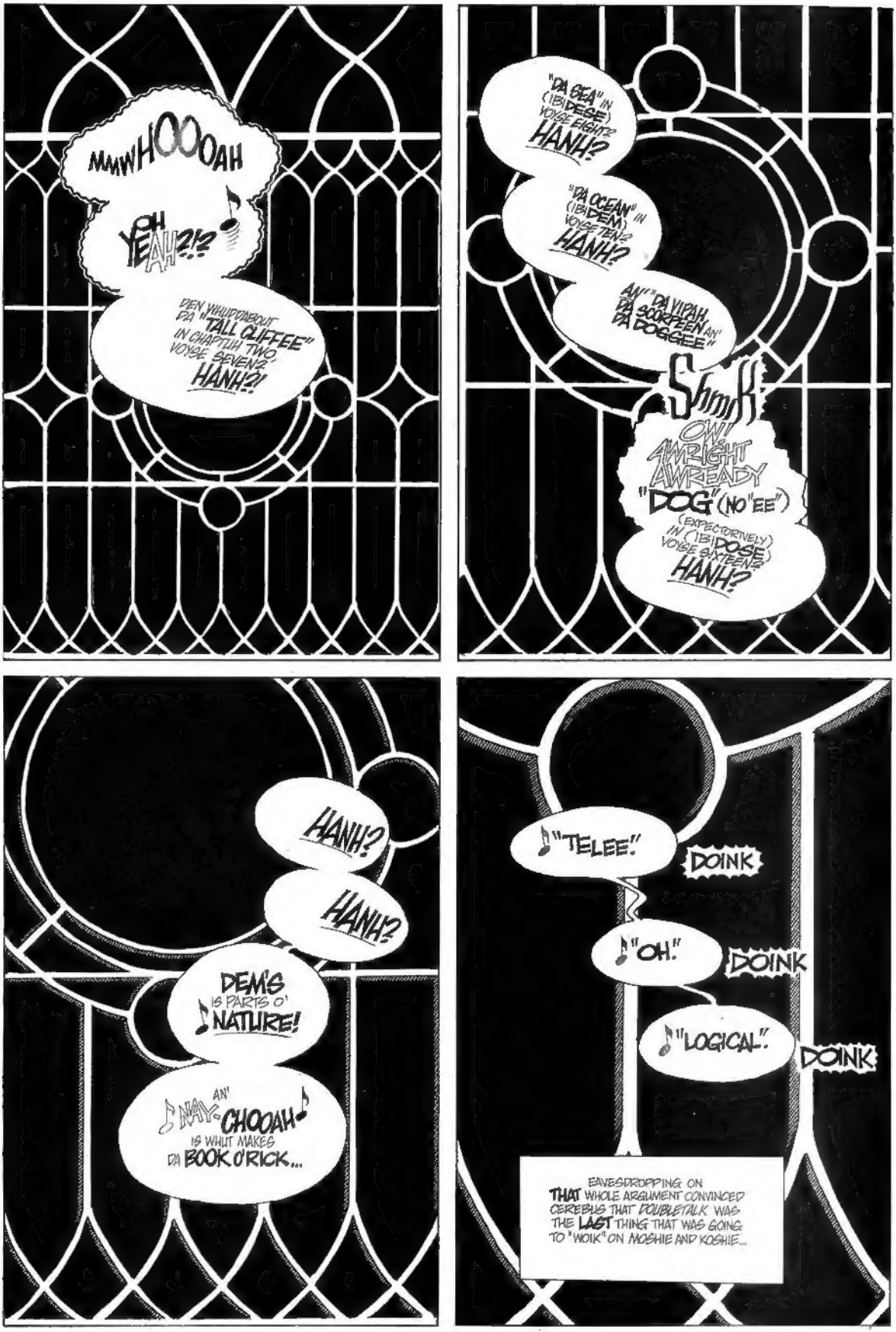
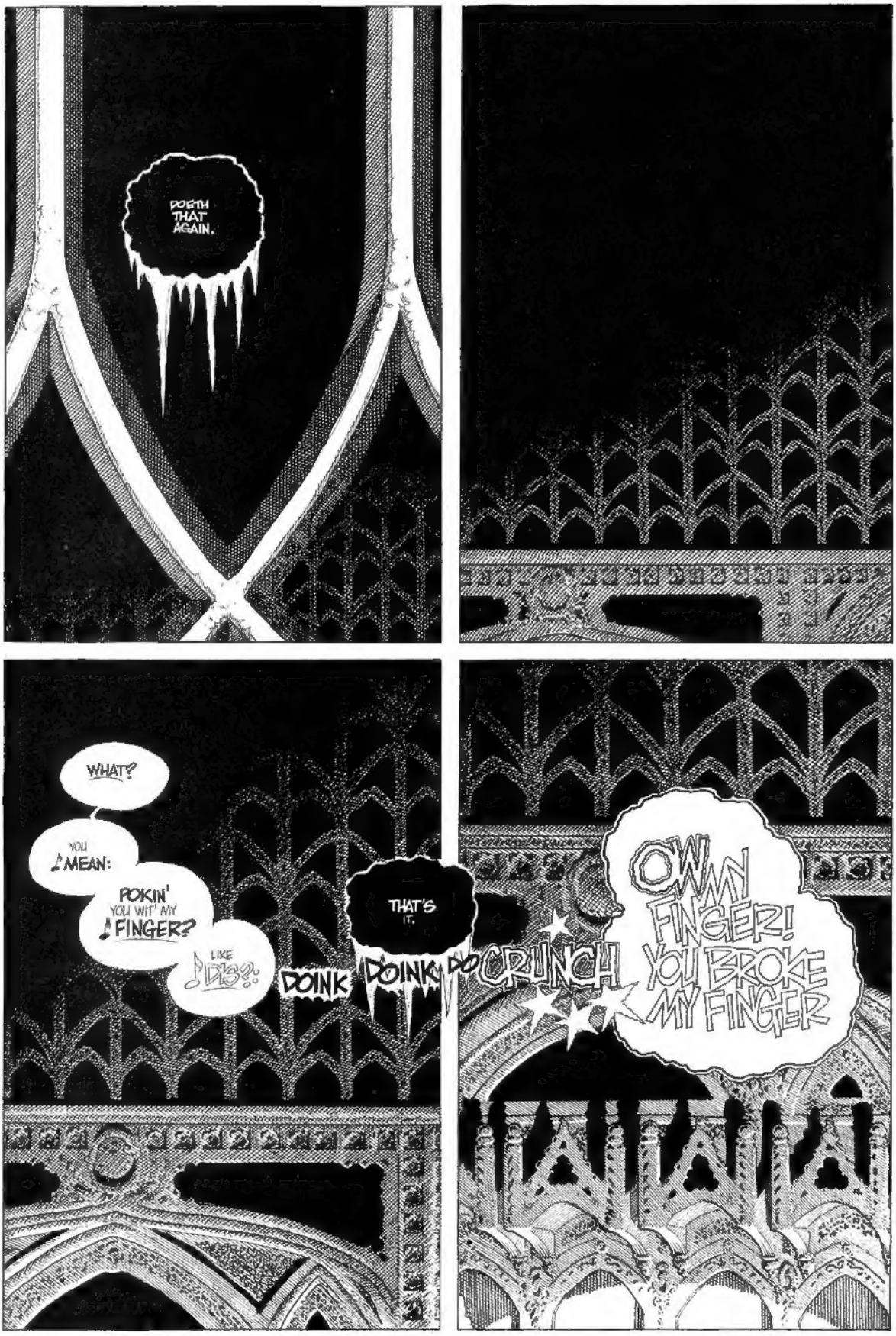
CEREBUS HAD QUITE A BIT OF TIME -- WHILE THEY WERE RECITING THE "BOOKEE OF RICKEE" TO HIM -- TO DECIDE HOW CEREBUS WAS GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS. FIRST (CEREBUS THOUGHT) HE WOULD TRY SOME DOUBLETALK ON 'EM! (AFTER ALL CEREBUS HAD BEEN -- ahem -- BOTH PRIME MINISTER AND POPE, SO CEREBUS) (TO SAY THE LEAST) (KNEW FROM DOUBLETALK)
AN' OI'M TELLIN' YOUSE DAT D' BOOKEE...
ShmK
...OW. DA BOOK OF RICK IS TELEOLOGICAL!

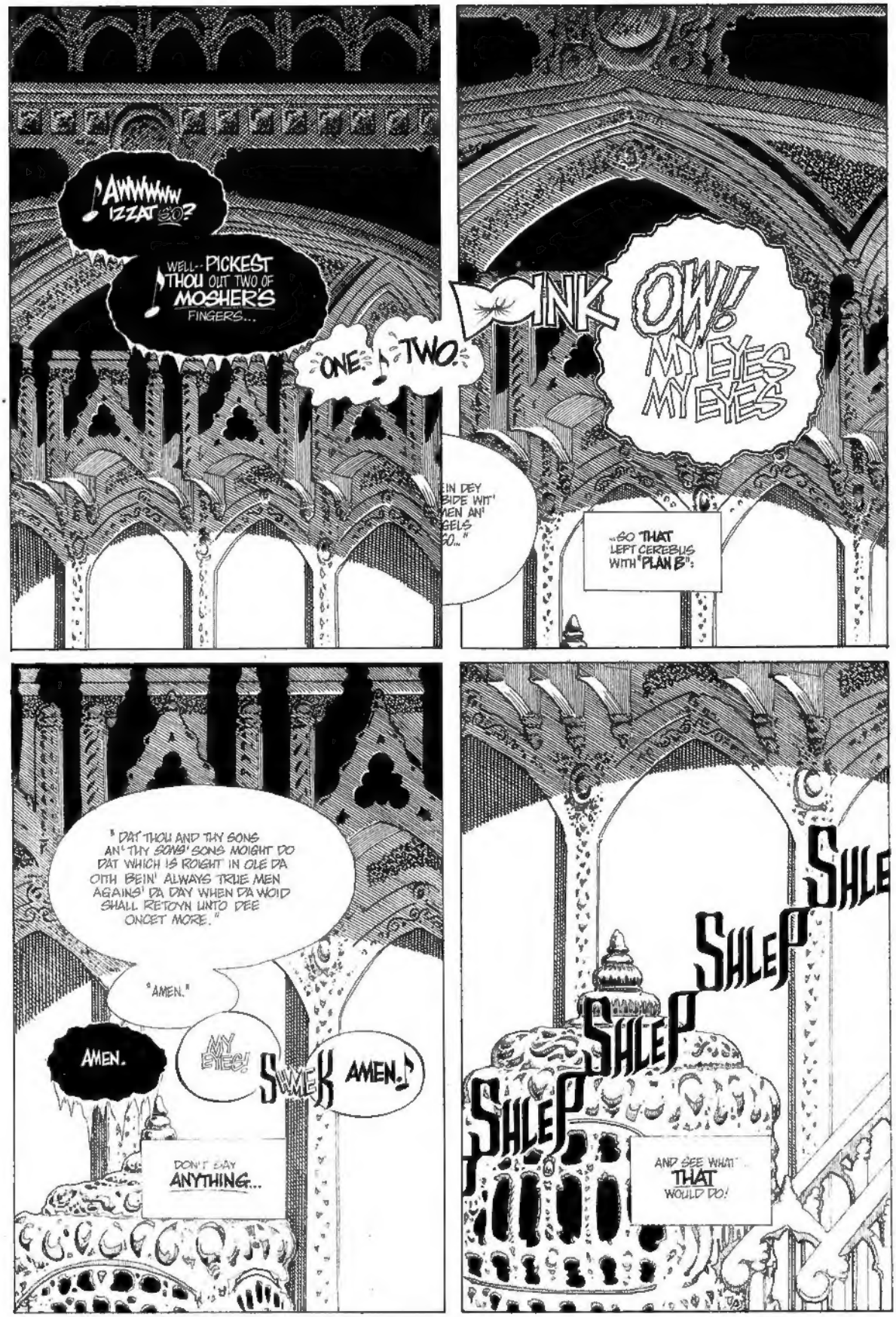

TELEOLOGICAL THY MUDDAH'S MUSTACHE...
...IT'S ESCHATOLOGICAL.

MMMM.
TELEOLOGICAL I TELL YA!
AN' YOU LEAVE MOI MUDDAH'S FACIAL HAIR OUTTA DIS!
LISTEN, MOZZARELLA

THE BOOK OF RICK CULMINATETH IN CHAPTAH THUHTEEN, VAHRSE THUHTEEN: "THAT WOID WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL MEN AND IN THE WHICH ALL MEN SHALL BE COMMANDED IN BRINGING AN END-TO-DIS-AGE WHICH HATH OVAHTUHNED ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS..." (AN' SETRA, AN' SETRA)
THAT MAKETH IT ESCHATOLOGICAL, PEBBLE BRAIN

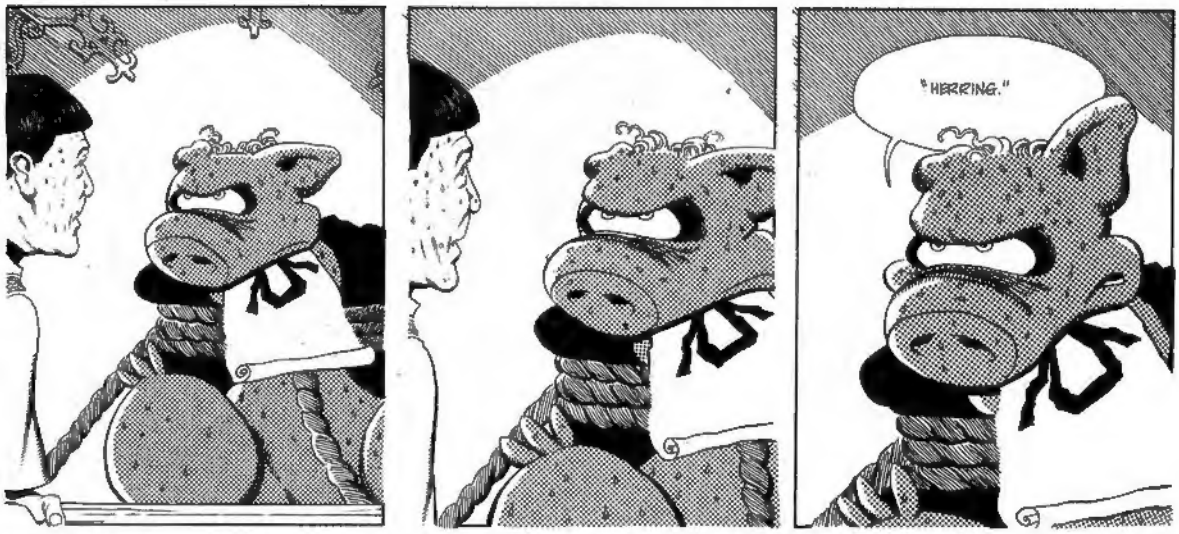

MMWHOOOAH
OH YEAH?!?
DEN WHUPPONBOUT DA "TALL CLIFFEE" IN CHAPTUH TWO, VOYSE SEVEN? HANH?!
"DA SEA" IN (IBI)DEGEE VOYSE EIGHTY? HANH?
"DA OCEAN" IN (IBI)DEEM VOYSE TEN? HANH?
AH! "DA VIPAH, DA SOOKPEEN AN' DA DOGGIEE"
Shmk
OW! AWRIGHT AWREADY "DOG" (NO"EE") (EXPECTORIVELY) IN (IBI)DOSE VOYSE SIXTEEN? HANH?
HANH?
HANH?
DEM'S IS PARTS O' NATURE!
AN' NAY-CHOOAH IS WHUT MAKES DA BOOK O'RICK...
"TELEE!"
DOINK
"OH."
DOINK
"LOGICAL."
DOINK
EAVESDROPPING ON THAT WHOLE ARGUMENT CONVINCED CEREBUS THAT DOUBLETALK WAS THE LAST THING THAT WAS GOING TO "WOIK" ON MOSHIE AND KOSHIE...


DOETH THAT AGAIN.
WHAT?
YOU ♪MEAN:
POKIN' YOU WIT' MY ♪FINGER?
LIKE ♪DIS?:
DOINK
DOINK
THAT'S IT.
DO
CRUNCH
OWW MY FINGER! YOU BROKE MY FINGER


AWWWWW IZZAT SO?
WELL-- THOU PICKEST OUT TWO OF MOSHER'S FINGERS...
ONE.
TWO.
INK
OW! MY EYES MY EYES
...SO THAT LEFT CEREBUS WITH "PLAN B":
"DAT THOU AND THY SONS AN' THY SONS' SONS MOIGHT DO DAT WHICH IS ROIGHT IN OLE DA OITH BEIN' ALWAYS TRUE MEN AGAINS' DA DAY WHEN DA WOID SHALL RETOYN UNTO DEE ONCET MORE."
"AMEN."
AMEN.
MY EYES!
SMEK
AMEN.
DON'T SAY ANYTHING...
SHLEP
SHLEP
SHLEP
SHLE
AND SEE WHAT THAT WOULD DO!

"WILT THOU NOW SPEAK UNTO THY SOYVINTS THE WOID OF TRUTH WHICH WAS PROMISED US OF DA PROPHET RICK?"
NA NA NEEEEE
WELL...
...IT DIDN'T DO MUCH OF ANYTHING. WE'D JUST STARE AT EACH OTHER A MINUTE OR SO...
AND THEN LOSHIE, MOSHIE AND KOSHIE WOULD DECLARE:
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
DEM♪
(WHAT'S EATING THOU?)
MMM♪
...PUT CEREBUS' GAG BACK ON...
I♪ T'INK WE OUGHTA HAVE ANUDDER WISE FELLA...
SO'S I GOT SUMBUDDY TA "PASS IT ON" WIT'
WHENSOBEIT THAT THOU FINDEST HIM?
♪YEAH?
GIVEST HIM THIS.
SHLEP SHLEP SHLEP SHMEK SHLEP
...AND GO ON ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AS IF CEREBUS WASN'T EVEN THERE...

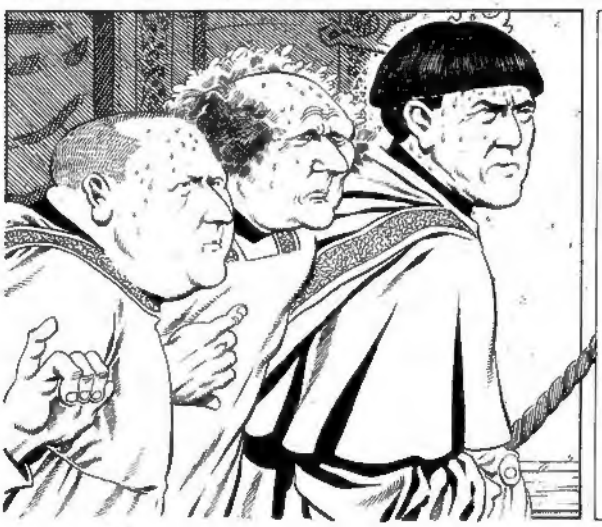
WHATEVER HOPE CEREBUS HAD THAT THEY WOULD JUST...GET BORED AND... LET CEREBUS GO... FADED AS SPRING TURNED INTO SUMMER AND THE TEMPERATURE IN THE SANCTUARY STARTED TO SOAR.
CEREBUS WAS EITHER (CEREBUS DECIDED) GOING TO HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING... OR MAKE UP HIS MIND TO JUST STAY BOUND IN PLACE "UPON BOXES OF UNFINISHED WOOD HAVING MANY SPLINTERS WHICH VEXED AND TROUBLED HIM SORELY" (RICK 3:18) FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE!
AND — SINCE ALL CEREBUS WAS BEING FED WERE "GOOD VICTUALS AND HEALTHY (AND A LITTLE WINE FOR HIS STOMACH'S SAKE)" (RICK 13:12) WHO KNEW HOW LONG THAT MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE?
"WILT THOU NOW SPEAK UNTO THY SERVANTS THE WORD OF TRUTH WHICH WAS PROMISED US OF THE PROPHET RICK?"
?
!
!!
!!!



SEE (THE WAY CEREBUS LOOKED AT IT) IT WAS **BETTER** (SEEING AS HOW CEREBUS WAS DEALING WITH COMPLETE AND TOTAL **FANATICS**) (OF SOME KIND OR OTHER) TO START **SMALL** AND (YOU KNOW) **BUILD** FROM **THERE**: START WITH (LITERALLY) **ONE** "**WORD** OF **TRUTH**"-- "*HERRING*" -- AND SEE WHAT *HAPPENS*. (**YEARS LATER**-- WHEN CEREBUS RE-READ EVERY "*ISSUE*" OF GARTH INNIGENT'S **RABBI** CEREBUS *REALIZED* THAT HE MUST HAVE *SUBCONSCIOUSLY* REMEMBERED "*ISSUE*" TWENTY-THREE: "**NOT ALL** MY **HERRING SHALL SAVE ME!**" WHICH (FRANKLY) DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF AN *IMPACT* ON CEREBUS THE *FIRST* TIME THROUGH BECAUSE *ONLY* ONE GUY DIED IN THAT ONE (**RABBI** SWUNG HIM AROUND BY HIS ANKLES) (YOU MAY RECALL) (SO THAT THE GUY'S *HEAD* WAS SMASHED LIKE A PIECE OF *FRUIT* AGAINST THE *DOORPOSTS* AND THE *LINTEL* OF **RABBI'S** *SHTETL OF SOLITUDE*) (AN *INTERESTING* WAY TO KILL A GUY, SURE-- BUT HANDLED *MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY*) (CEREBUS THOUGHT) (IN **RABBI** "*ISSUE*" EIGHT'S "(UNLEAVENED) **BREAD**, (BITTER) **HERBS**, (BLOODY) **ABATTOIR!**"

(CEREBUS SHOULD FIND OUT WHO DREW THE *PICTURES* IN *RABBI* SOME DAY)

(SOME OF THEM ARE REALLY GOOD)



ANY WAY --
EVERYTHING WENT VERY QUIET IN THE SANCTUARY. *MOSHIE*, *LOSHIE* AND *KOSHIE* JUST... **STOOD** THERE... LETTING IT SINK IN:

"HERRING?"

COULD... "HERRING"... BE THE WORD OF TRUTH THAT RICK HAD PROMISED THEM?

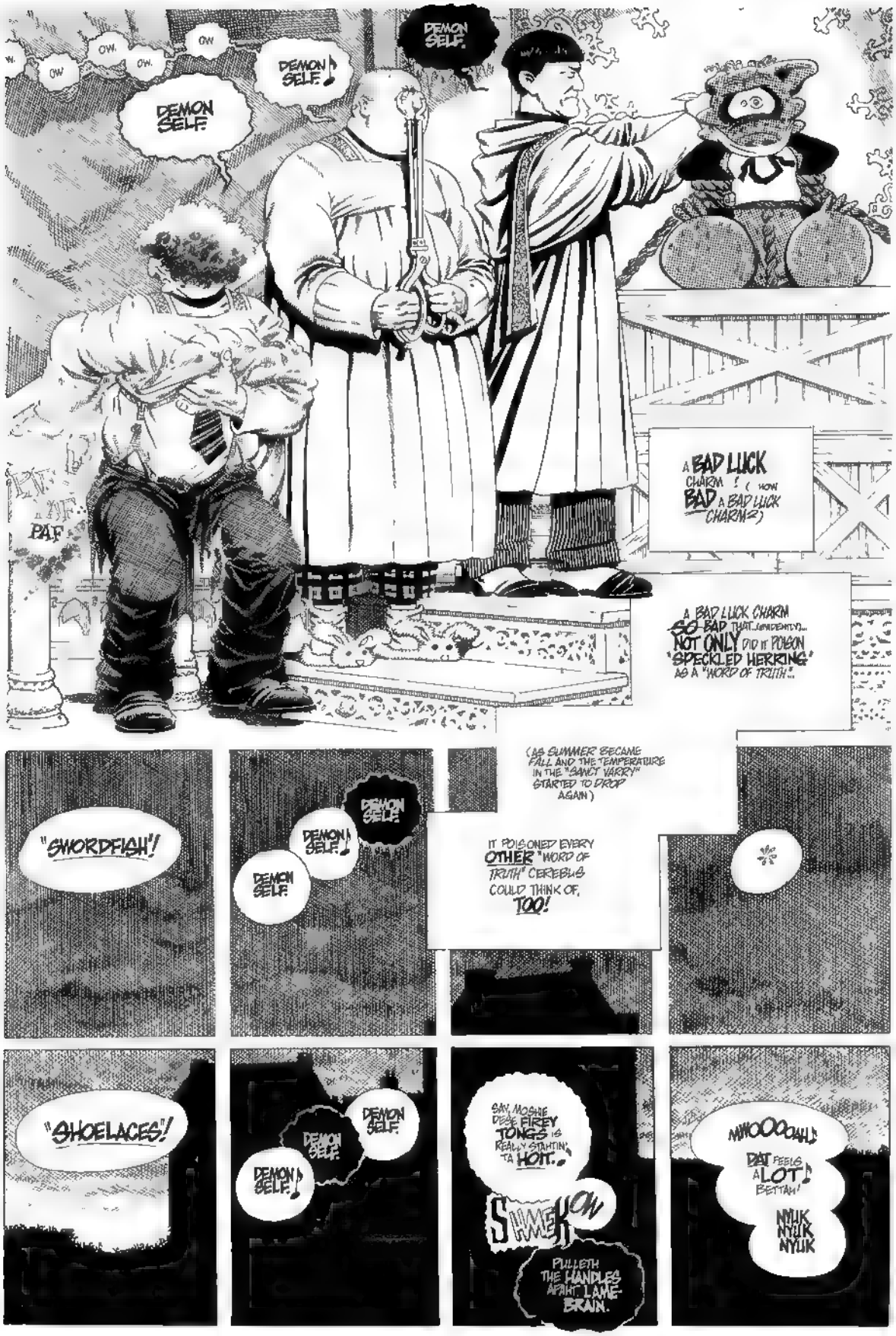
(MORE **IMPORTANT**-- COULD CEREBUS *GET AWAY* WITH **CONVINCING** THEM THAT "HERRING" WAS THE *WORD OF TRUTH*?)

JUST WHEN IT LOOKED AS IF CEREBUS **WAS** GOING TO GET AWAY WITH IT: **SUDDENLY**: **DRAMATICALLY**:

PICKLED!
SMOKED!
SALTED!
OH NO!
(JUST WHAT CEREBUS WAS AFRAID OF)
WISE FELLOW SCHISM!
(A REGULAR PERCUSSION SECTION OF MAYHEM FOLLOWED).
IT'S LOIK I TOLJEZ: WE'E SUPPOSETA STAY PICKLED ALL DAY:
"SEEKEST THOU STRONGEE DRINKEE?" (RICKEE CHAPTUH ONE YONGE TWO)
TUMP
Clonk
OW!
DONK!
BAS
SMEK
SMAK
"BE CONTENT WITH THINE OWN CUP." MAGGOT BRAIN
(AND CEASE THE PRONOUNCING OF THY SILENT "E"s)
DONK
LISTEN NIGHTINGALE. WHEREFORE POEST THOU ASSAIL THE EARDRUMS OF MOSHER?
MWOOaw!!
A PILLAR OF SMOKE BY DAY? A FIERY GLOW BY NIGHT?
BONK
OW
NA-NA NEEEH!
I'M FOUREEN' MOISELF A MIGHTEEN' CUP...
"AN' PUT IN A FILL MEASURE" (ASSBRICKS)
NNUK NNUK NNUK
SMEK
CRASH
NOW LOOK WHAT YA DID!
BONK
PIPETH DAHN.
MMM
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT IF I BROKE A WHOLE BOTTLE OF YOAH! AFTUH-SHAVEE CUH-LOANEE?
GNETH THY HEAD A SHAVE, PORCUPYNE
HE WHO WETHUS NOT TO LOOK BACK UPON ADVERSITIES
LEST WE TURNETH INTO PILLARS OF SALT.
CHEE OY NOAH'S THROAT O'DAT!
(ASTORICKS) BOOKEE OF SHME
OW
RICK
WELL.. I WISH SLUM BUDDY'D BREAK A WHOLE BOTTLE O' MOSHIE'S AFTUH-SHAVE..
PEE. YOU.
KONK
OW!
WHO ASKEEST THOU?
I-LISTEN, MOSHIE-- YOAH GETTIN' ME MAD!
(FROM ONE SIDE OF THE "SANCT-VARRY" "UNTO" THE OTHER)
KLONG
...ANVIL?
I CN NEVAH REMEMBEH DAT WORD NEITHEH (NNUK NNUK NNUK)
CAREFUL NOW-- THAT ROPE HOLDETH UP THE--
THE
THIS
YEAH? WHAT INTENDEST THOU? OR-
? SAY!

(IT WAS THE ANVIL THAT TOLD CEREBELUS THE WHOLE THING WAS GETTING A LITTLE OUT OF HAND.)
HEY!
WHERE YA GOIN', MOSHIE?
MOSHER PREHREET! TO CHECK AND SEE IF THOSE RIVETS LOSHIE LEFT IN THE FAHNACE OF ETOYNAL FIRE ♪ MATH HEATETH UPPETH SUFFICIENTLY...
OH!
OH...
JOHN...
SO HOW DID IT GO?
OH.
THEY PASSETH MUSHTER.
$$$$$
VANG
ZIP
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
MOSHIE! STOP! T'INK WHUT Y' DOEEN!
WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP WOOP
MOSHER IS THINKETHING UPON WHATSOEVE HE DOETH:
ZIP
THAT SOME WAY MOSHER SMILETH
CLANG CLANG CLANG
(IT WAS THE WHIPPING RED-HOT RIVETS AT EACH OTHER THAT TOLD CEREBELUS THESE WISE FELLOWS WERE CAPABLE OF KILLING EACH OTHER AND (MORE IMPORTANTLY) SHUSH-LEAVING CEREBELUS TO STARVE TO DEATH ON THE BOXES OF UNFINISHED WOOD!)
WHACK
RED HOT RIVET IN MOY LINDA WAYRE!
JUMP HOP
HOP JUMP
SAY, WHUT WUZ DA NAYME UV DA BAIND! WHUT POKST PUH FOAMED 'RED-HOT RIVET IN MOY LINDA WAYRE'?
FR
I
K
NO, I WASN'T "SHRIEK"
(IT WAS SOME BAIND A LOIK DAT THOUGH.)
(AS A LOW-FLYING RIVET GRAZED CEREBELUS' SCALP)
...
WUZ IT: "FIRE-TONGS CRUSHETH THY SEPTUM" PERADVENTURE?
SCORCH
NO. "FIRE-TONGS CRUSHETH THY SEPTUM" WUZ DA NAME OF "SHRIEK'S" FUEL-SHEEN' COMPNEE' DEY HELD ALL O' "SHRIEK'S" COPYRI...
CRUNCH
UNCH UNCH NYING NYING NYING
(...CEREBELUS FIGURED HE BETTER DO SOMETHING...)
(...QUICK!)
CLANG CLANG CLANG
"SPECKLED!"
(YELLED CEREBELUS)

NOW (TO THIS DAY) CEREBUS HAS NO IDEA IF THERE EVEN IS SUCH A THING AS A "SPECKLED HERRING."
(CEREBUS REALLY HAS TO MAKE A POINT OF LOOKING IT UP SOMETIME)
BUT (THE THING WAS) IT SEEMED TO WORK! THE THREE WISE FELLOWS JUST FROZE...
(...RIGHT IN MID-SCHISM...)
...THE RED-HOT RIVET...
CLANK
...FOUND IT'S WAY OUT OF ...OSHIE'S UNDERWEAR
OW.
OW
HERE.
HOLDEST THOU THIS.
IN FACT... "SPECKLED HERRING" WORKED LIKE A CHARM.
SHLEP
SHLEP
SHLEP
SHLEP
SHLEP


OW.
OW.
OW.
OW.
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
PAF
A BAD LUCK CHARM! (HOW BAD A BAD LUCK CHARM?)
A BAD LUCK CHARM SO BAD THAT...(UNEXPECTEDLY)... NOT ONLY DID IT POISON SPECKLED HERRING AS A "WORD OF TRUTH"...
"SWORDFISH"!
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
(AS SUMMER BECAME FALL AND THE TEMPERATURE IN THE "SANCT VARRY" STARTED TO DROP AGAIN)
IT POISONED EVERY OTHER "WORD OF TRUTH" CEREBUS COULD THINK OF, TOO!
"SHOELACES"!
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
DEMON SELF.
SAY, MOSHE DEEE, FIREY TONGS IS REALLY STARTIN' TA HOIT.
SLIMEKOW
PULLETH THE HANDLES APART, LAME-BRAIN.
NNHOOOOAH!
DAT FEELS A LOT BETTAH!
NYUK NYUK NYUK

AND - DON'T FORGET - IT WASN'T JUST A MATTER OF TRYING OUT THE DIFFERENT "WORDS OF TRUTH" TO SEE WHICH ONE MIGHT "WORK"...
"KUMQUAT!"
DEMON SELF
DEMON SELF!
DEMON SELF
...IN BETWEEN CEREBUS WOULD HAVE TO LISTEN TO THE ENTIRE BOOK OF RICK (WHICH, OF COURSE, IS THE LIVING WORD OF TRUTH -- DON'T GET CEREBUS WRONG HEH-HEH - BUT EVEN THE LIVING WORD OF TRUTH...

Chapter the Fifth

1 Rickes second test 3 Cerebus intreate Tarim to send Joanne 5 Cerebus takes counsel with Joanne 7 Ricke and Joanne speake together 12 Cerebus speaketh a parable unto Ricke 17 Ricke goeth without the sanctwarie

BE Cerebus knew in his great wisdome that the Ricke now habdst a greater understanding than beforetimes stil and yet was Rickes understanding not perfect like unto the wisedome and understanding of Cerebus.

2 • And so it came to passe that on the following date Cerebus didst devise a test for Ricke to try his faith and understanding.

3 • And Cerebus did intreat of Tarim that he send unto the sanctwarie one of his Angels which wss called Joanne.

4 • When Ricke beheldе Joanne Rickes heart leapt within his chest for shee was exceding faire and her nature radiated from her like unto the brilliance of the sunne.

5 • And Cerebus moved a litle apart from Ricke that he might take counsel with Joanne and beseech her that she might looke kindly upon Ricke and show favour unto him.

6 • And when Cerebus had made an ende of his counsel with Joanne he returned unto his place behinde The Barre having bade Ricke to draive nigh unto Joannes place.

7 • And after drawing nigh unto Joanne, Ricke spake unto her of his booke and of Truth.

8 • That Joanne might enter into the Booke of Ricke and bee no more Joanne but to bee instead Divine Radiance (which is by interpretation Tarim's Wisdome).

9 • And Joanne spake unto Ricke of Dave (whom Ricke knew not).

10 • And Cerebus came nigh unto Ricke and Joanne speaking in a lowde voice and cleaning of the barre (howsobeit the barre was not uncleane) and saying unto Ricke and unto Joanne Raise up the cuppes.

11 • And making a face unto Ricke like unto that of a lunaticke with much twitching of his face and much grinding of his teeth and saying unto Ricke:

12 • Cerebus goeth now without the sanctuarie for the cleaning of the windowes of the west wall. If any shouldst come in unto the sanctuarie speake ye unto them of where Cerebus might bee found.

13 • And Ricke was perplexed within himselfe at these wordes which Cerebus spake unto Ricke and inquired of Cerebus If Cerebus bee without the sanctuarie will not those who enter herein see Cerebus?

14 • And in a lowde voice did Cerebus answer unto Ricke saying: Exactly.

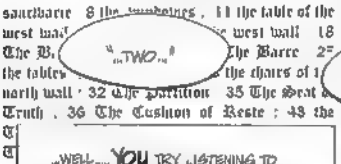
15 • (And Ricke perceived within himself that Cerebus had spoken unto Ricke a parable concerning lunatickes within and without the sanctuarie).

16 • Howsobeit Ricke was blinded by Divine Radiance and hearkened not unto the words of Cerebus but instead followed Joanne without the sanctuarie.

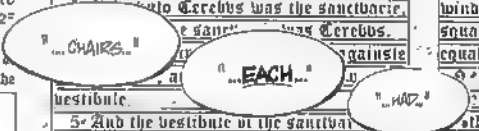
17 • And Ricke was without the sanctuarie unto the rising of the morning.

Chapter the Thirde

1 Ricke communes Truth . 4 the vestibule and the sanctwarie 8 the windowes . 11 the table of the west wall 15 the west wall 18 The Bowle 25 The Barre 27 the tables 29 the chaires of 1 north wall . 32 The partition 35 The great Truth . 36 The Cushion of Reste ; 43 the



DID Ricke begun to write of Cerebus and the sanctwarie and the Truth:



2 • Cerebus was of the sanctwarie, and the sanctwarie was of Cerebus.

3 • And unto Cerebus was the sanctwarie, and unto the sanctwarie was Cerebus.

4 • And there was a vestibule against the [illegible] vestibule.

5 • And the vestibule of the sanctwarie four paces and one halfe in its width and four paces and one halfe in its lengthe.

6 • And the doore of the vestibule of the sanctwarie on its outer side swung to the left upon its inward part.

7 • And the doore of the vestibule of the sanctwarie (which doore gabe in upon the sanctwarie) was ouer againste the righte hande of the vestibule and swung to the righte upon its inward part.

8 • And sixe windowes were they upon the west wall of the sanctwarie. And the sixe windowes were they each equall in size and square (having they foure sides each and equall).

9 • And the windowes of the west wall were they [illegible] of two, one upon other, [illegible] of the [illegible] three windo[illegible] each [illegible] and square (having they [illegible] and equall).

10 • And before the windowes of the west wall on the inward parte of the sanctwarie was there a table.

11 • And the table of the west wall wis rounde upon its top and upon one center poste rested the toy of the table of the west

wall.

12. And the center poste of the table of the west wall was rounde like vnto a cylinder. Like vnto a cylinder was the center poste of the table of the west wall.

13. And the base of the table of the west wall was round like vnto the top of the table of the west wall albeit smaller was the base of the table of the west wall than the top of the table.

14. And there were two chairs ouer againste the windowes of the west wall to the north side going northward of the table of the west wall was there one chair and to the south side going southward of the table of the west wall was there an other chair.

15. And each of the chairs ouer againste the windowes of the west wall had each of them a backe vpon them.

16. And the backes of the chairs of the west wall were they both square (like vnto the doore and the windowes) vpon their downward side; and rounde (like vnto the top of the table and the base of the table of the west wall) vpon their vpward side.

17. And the backes of the chairs of the west wall rested vpon two small postes like vnto cylinders (tho not so large as the centerposte of the table of the west wall) which ioined the backes of the chairs to the seates of the chairs of the west wall. Like vnto the small postes were the legges of the chairs of the west wall. And four legges had each chair being round like vnto the two small postes.

18. Standing froward of the South Wall was The Barre behinde which stood Cerebvs (stood hee vpon boxes of vnfinished wood hauing many splintres which vexed and troubled him sorely)

19. And the length of The Barre was eighteen paces. Eighteen paces was the length of The Barre standing froward of the south Wall.

20. And before The Barre of the South Wall stood there sixe stooles.

21. And the stooles of The Barre were taller than the chairs of the table of the west wall. Like vnto the chairs of the west wall were the stooles of The Barre excepte hauing they no backes and being they taller and the seates of the stooles of The Barre being round like vnto the top of the table of the west wall.

22. And like vnto the legges of the chairs of the table of the west wall were the legges of the stooles of The Barre and round.

23. And the stooles of The Barre sixe in number stooles

24. And stooles of The Barre were vpon Cerebvses right hande, and three of the stooles of The Barre were vpon Cerebvses left hande.

25. And ouer againste the north wall were there three tables. Three tables were there ouer againste the north wall.

26. Like vnto the table of the west wall were the three tables of the north wall excepte that the three tables of the north wall were taller than the table of the west wall and the tops of the three tables of the north wall were of smaller circumference than the top of the table of the west wall.

27. But the centre postes of the three tables of the north wall were alike vnto the centre poste of the table of the west wall in their circumference; and the bases of the tables of the north wall were alike vnto the base of the table of the west wall.

28. And each of the three tables of the north wall had they two chairs each. Two chairs each had the three tables of the north wall.

29. And each of the three tables of the north wall had they one chair vpon their east side running eastward; and each of the three tables of the north wall had they one chair vpon their west side running westward.

30. Like vnto the stooles of The Barre were the chairs of the tables of the north wall, excepte that the chairs of the tables of the north wall had they backes which in the stooles of The Barre were lacking thereof.

31. Like vnto the backes of the chairs of the table of the west wall were the backes of the chairs of the tables of the north wall.

32. And vpon the north wall of the sanctvarie, eastward of the three tables of the north wall was The Partition.

33. And The Partition was foure paces in its width and was halfe of one hands width in its depth and The Partition was attached to the north wall and ascended to the full height of the north wall and was attached to the ceiling of the sanctvarie.

34. And The Partition stood out from the north wall running southward foure paces.

35. Eastward of The Partition ouer againste the north wall (two paces eastward) was the Seate of Truth, hewen of the finest timbres and of square beames.

36. Vpon the backe of the Seate of Truth was the Cushion of Reste, rounde and woven of the finest silke and embroidered with threade of blew and scarlett and purple.

37. And vpon the Seate of Truth sat Ricke with his Booke iudging al matters as they pertained to Cerebvs and the sanctvarie and Truth.

38. It was vpon the Seate of Truth that Ricke was first told of Goe On and Beate It and Scramme by Cerebvs, that Ricke might write his booke of Cerebvs and the sanctvarie and Truth.

39. Likewise Ricke vpon the Seate of Truth was did call [illegible] to test R[illegible] his faith.

40. Still likewise was Ricke upon the Seate of Truth when Cerebvs was taken by his Daemon Selfe and sought to imprison Ricke in the depths of the Infinitie Serpents realm.

41. Ricke was of the Seate of Truth and the Seate of Truth was of Ricke.

42. Like vnto Ricke was the Seate of Truth and like vnto the Seate of Truth was Ricke.

43. Eastward of the Seate of Truth was the Table of the Foure.

44. And the Table of the Foure stood on the left hande of Ricke when he sat vpon the Seat of Truth.

45. Like vnto the table of the west wall and the three tables of the north wall was the Table of the Foure excepte that the Table of the Foure was shorter than either the table of the west wall or the three tables of the north wall. Also was the Table of the Foure greater in the circumference of its top than the table of the west wall or the three tables of the north wall. In all other respects was the Table of the Foure like

vnto the table of the west wall and the three tables of the north wall.

46. Of the Table of the Foure was it that Ricke saw his vision of the ende of daies of Cerebvs and of the sanctvarie and of Truth in the latter daies.

47. And Ricke spake not vnto Cerebvs of his vision of the latter daies for such was it giuen vnto Ricke of the Seate of Truth that Ricke onely should see these things.

48. Like vnto Ricke was the Seate of Truth and like vnto the Seate of Truth was Ricke.

49. And ouer againste the south wall eastward of the Barre (which side of the Barre being of a strait line with the Partition) and standing before the Seate of Truth was the Tableux of the Sanctuaries.

50. And the Tableaux of the Sanctuaries spoke to the Seate of Truth and to Ricke of all things concerning Cerebvs and the sanctuarie and the Truth.

51. Of foure parts was the Tableux of the Sanctuaries and of the Tableux of the Sanctuaries was there foure parts.

52. Of the firste part of the Tableaux of the Sanctuaries was the Seate of the Left Hande standing at the corner of the west wall and of the south wall froward of the Table of the Foure and hauing as its righte interpretation one of the chairs of the Table of the Foure. And the interpretation was of the Infinitie Serpent for the Seate of the Left Hande was the Infinite Seate.

And to the ri[illegible] of the Left Hande stood the [illegible] Wood froward of the Table of the Foure and hauing as its righte interpretation one of the chairs of the Table of the Foure. And the interpretation was of the Infinitie Serpent for the wood of the Boxe of the Wood were the soules of those held by the Infinite Serpent. And the interpretation was also of Tarim for the wood of the Boxe of the Wood held likewise the soules

AFTER ONE PARTICULARLY EXCRUTIATING "KOSHIE TURN" (HE KEPT LOSING HIS PLACE IN CHAPTER THREE AND) (AAAAAAAAAGHHHH!) (STARTING OVER AGAIN AT THE BEGINNING) WHEN HE FINALLY FINISHED ASKED THE "WORD OF TRUTH" QUESTION AND TOOK CEREBUS' GAG OFF CEREBUS JUST BLURT OUT WITH:
LISTEN! YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG GUY!
SERIOUSLY! FRED IS JUST A RUN-OF-THE-MILL SEX-CRAZED CRIMINAL DEGENERATE TITTY-BAR OWNER!
DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVOYCE FOR A FELLA LOOKIN TA GET INTA DAT LINE O' WOIK?
SHMAK
OW!
MOSHER HEARDEST THAT.

NOW CEREBUS WAS REALLY WORRIED.

SEE:

CEREBUS FIGURED SINCE THEY WERE (OBVIOUSLY) RELIGIOUS NUTS, SAYING "SEX-CRAZED," "DEGENERATE" AND "TITTY" IN THE SAME SENTENCE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO GET CEREBUS KILLED ON THE SPOT!

(WHICH HAD BEEN THE WHOLE IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE) (CEREBUS FINALLY REMEMBERED) (AND HAD BEEN THE WHOLE IDEA SINCE SAND HILLS CREEK) (JUST LIKE IT USED TO SAY ON CEREBUS' REPORT CARD: "CEREBUS HAS THE NECESSARY ABILITIES, BUT IS TOO EASILY DISTRACTED BY UNRELATED SUBJECTS") (i.e. GETTING HIMSELF KILLED VERSUS SHEEP FARMING, BECOMING THE BIGGEST FIVE-BEAR GATE LOSER IN NORTHERN ISSHURIA'S HISTORY AND LANDING THE STARRING ROLE IN THE BOOK OF RICK CHAPTER THIRTEEN) (AS HIMSELF) (NO LEGS) (WITH NO IDEA WHAT HIS ONLY LINE OF DIALOGUE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.)

BUT INSTEAD:

DEMON SELF.

DEMON SELF.

DEMON SELF.

"ALL RIGHT" CEREBUS THOUGHT TO HIMSELF AS MOSHIE STARTED HIS TURN. "ALL RIGHT" CEREBUS THOUGHT TO HIMSELF AS HE TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO. "ALL RIGHT." (HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT IT'S ONLY WHEN THINGS ARE REALLY, REALLY NOT "ALL RIGHT" THAT YOU JUST KEEP SAYING "ALL RIGHT" OVER AND OVER TO YOURSELF?)

"ALL RIGHT WHAT?" CEREBUS ASKED HIMSELF. REALLY LOUD. LIKE THAT. INSIDE HIS HEAD.)

"ALL RIGHT" THOUGHT CEREBUS. "THEY'RE DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS NUTS. THEY BELIEVE RICK WAS A PROPHET...SO THEY'RE (LIKE) "LIGHT" ON THE "RELIGIOUS" PART AND "HEAVY" ON THE "NUT" PART.

HEH HEH HEH

11 And when
a path even out
certaine ruler
house and risordo
12 And, lo, t
like unto the tha
mountaine (yea
mounting) fell a
certa.ne ruler ca
13 And for ma
had his goings
through an upper
14 And
saying, Beclar
this certaine rule
the u per l'ke dw
like unto the bark
16 And Cereb
Verily, thou sh
ruppe from white
thou knowest the
then, thou shalt
cappe ouelp
17 And Cerebus
barre for the poore
(and that in a fulle
18 And as
poured & tooke
the words of Cer
had spoken unto h
the sanctuarie alle
upon me.

Chapter the Second

1 The morning cuppe 5 Ricke pledgers to followe Cerebus 7 Cerebus tempts Ricke 15 inviting to the partyhouse to geare

And after that Cerebus had given unto me the morning cuppe of the full measure, Cerebus placed it before me and bid rise up there within the sanctuarie and moved a litte apart from me.

2 And
within
upon
Cerebu
3 And
the sa
upon
to foll
the sa
spake
4 And
5 And
things
and a
come.

6 And Cerebus grew wroth and spake angerily, asking me, Art thou a foole why following Cerebus knowest not where Cerebus doth go?

(OHH!— OF COURSE THIS WAS BEFORE CEREBUS UNDERSTOOD THAT RICK WAS AND IS A PROPHET AND THAT RICK IS OF THE SEAT OF TRUTH AND THE SEAT OF TRUTH IS OF RICK AND...UH... ALL THAT STUFF.)

and verily. Ricke will tellinge
den oft of the tallest of talle

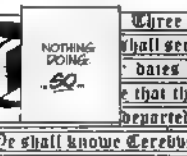
& likewise will & the follow
en perchaunce Cerebus should
selfe unto the deepest waters o

then bidst Cerebus shake his
, regarding first the barre of
hande and then regarding the
erebus right hande. And then
s regard Ricke, speaking
Ricke as beforetimes, saying,
place is there within the
that Ricke has not bene (and
Cerebus as well), neither upon the stooles,
nor behinde the barre, nor at the tables,
all of these places have ye verne (and
Cerebus as well).

ALL RIGHT SO THE THING TO DO WITH RELIGIOUS NUTS (IF YOU WANT THEM TO KILL YOU) CEREBUS FIGURED IS TO PERSUADE THEM THAT YOU'RE TOO EVIL TO LIVE!
UNDERAGE?
THEY WERE ALL UNDERAGE! CANDY? THE BLONDE?
COOKIE
COOKIE! (SORRY) FRED WON HER IN A CARD GAME ... WHEN SHE WAS TEN!

Chapter the Thirteenth

1. Ricke addresseth the Three Wise Fellowes : 4
Binding Cerebus : 12 Feeding Cerebus : 14
Unbinding Cerebus

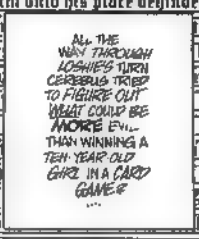


Three Wise Fellowes
shall serue Cerebus in the
daies when it come to
e that the Prophet Ricke
departed from this earth.

2. Ye shall knowe Cerebus when thou seest
three fingers vpon his righte hande and three
fingers u
hree toes upon his
right foot
upon his left. A
finger for
e and for each wise
fellowe a

3. When
ned that he whom
thou has
surely the One
Cerebus then bind him with strong cords and
bear him vnto the sanctwarie which thou hast
built

4. Bind him vnto his place behinde the barre
and recite in
this booke
from the fir
last.


ALL THE WAY THROUGH LOSHIES TURN CEREBUS TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT COULD BE MORE EVIL... THAN WINNING A TEN-YEAR OLD GIRL IN A CARD GAME.

5. And w
n ende o
reciting ing
6. Wilt th
servants
the worde o
sed us o
the Prophet
7. Then
And if he
speake unto
h

8. Then hearken ye vnto him and doe as he
commaundeth thee.

9. Y
he worde o
truth
s Daemon
Selle
ste vnto him
again
m the first
worde

10.
Forsake
not a
orsake thee
in the latter daies. Ricke ye vnto Cerebus
each in thy turne from the first dawning of the
daie euen vnto the setting of the sunne
inquiring of him each time that thou has made
an ende

11. Wilt thou now speake vnto thy servants
the worde of truth which was promised us of
the Prophet Ricke?

12. Feede Cerebus of thy bountie good
victuals and healthie (and a litle wine for his
stomaches sake) keeping him bound until hee
speake vnto thee that worde of truth that al
might be fulfilled according to the worde of
Ricke which is come vnto thee.

13. And when it come to passe that Cerebus
hath spoken vnto thee that worde which shalbe
to all men and in the which all men should be
commaunded in bringing an ende to this age
which hath ouerturned all righteousness after
the maner of the deuill and the viper and the
scorpion

14. By that worde shal Cerebus unbind
himselfe and unbind the spirit of all men who
followe in the worde of Ricke and the worde of
Cerebus

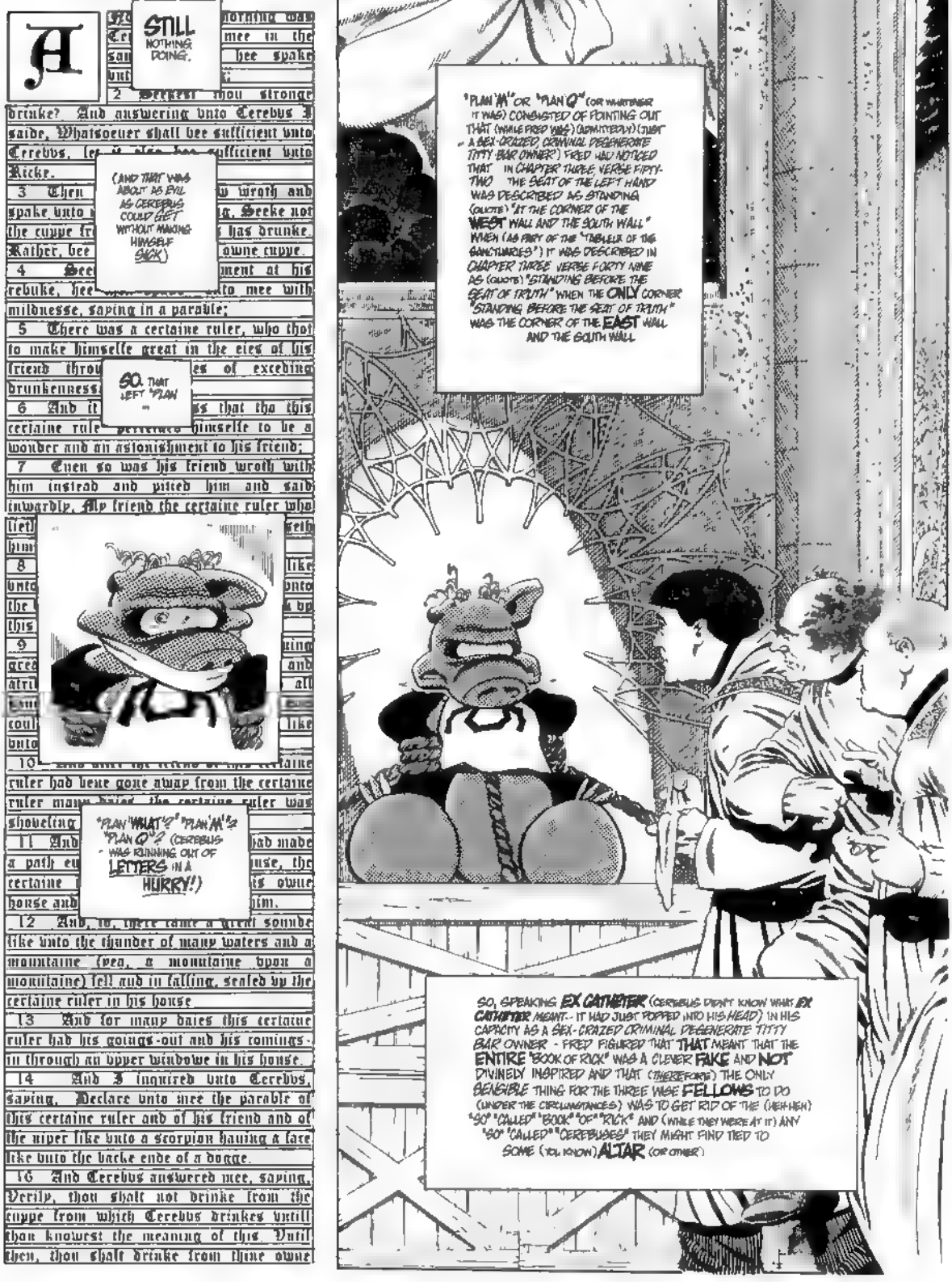
15. Then shalt thou execute iudgement in
ridding the earth of deuills and vipers and

IT WAS PRETTY EVIL (SO CEREBUS WILL JUST GIVE YOU THE "PUNCHLINE")
THE WORST PART WAS TRYING TO GET THE DIAPER BACK ON AFTER!
SPIT-SPITT-SPAH-TOO!
(HIIAAY HSSSSS)
(SHORT-SHORTY SUH-NORT)

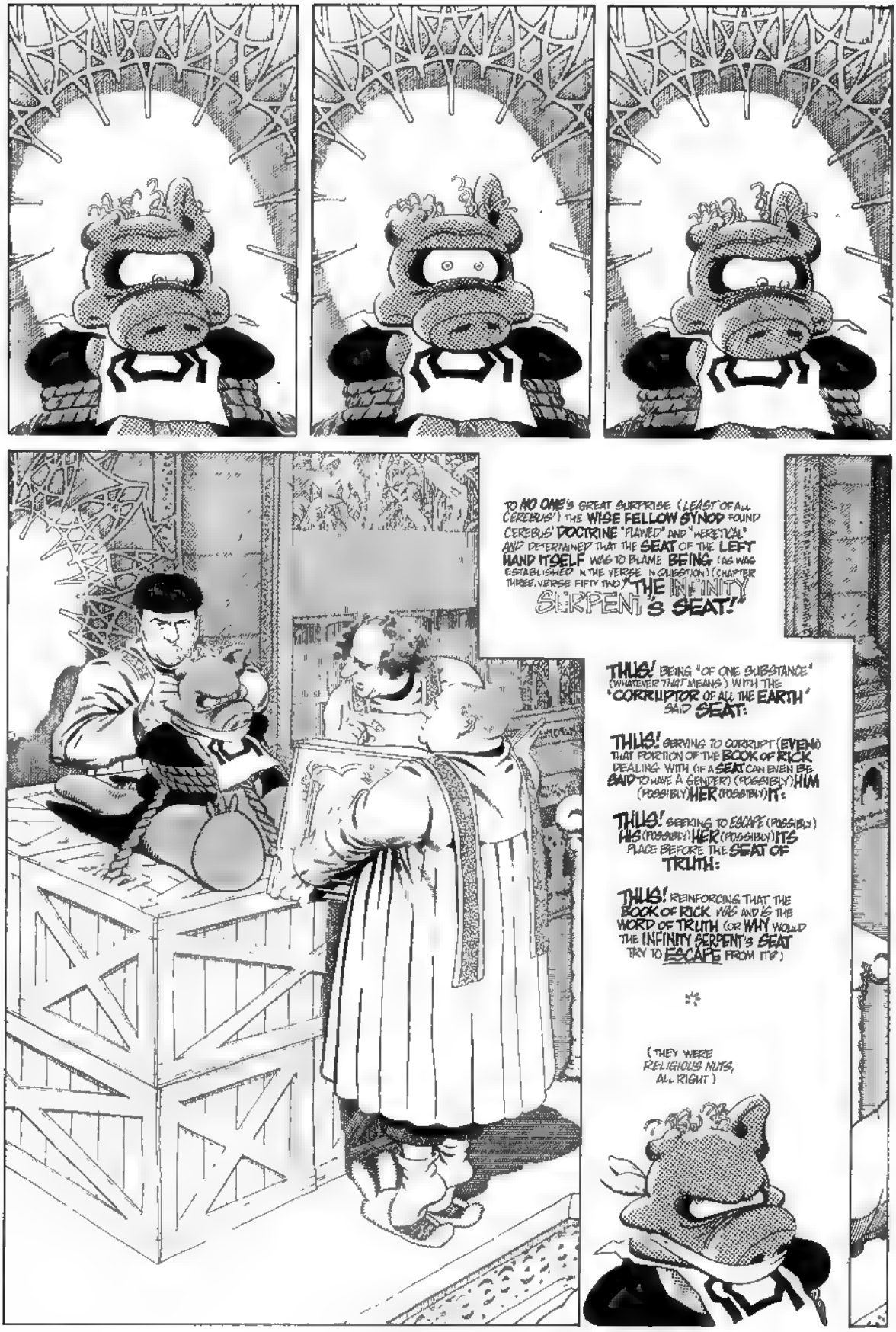
Chapter the Farste

1. The first morning . 4 Cerebus rebukes Ricke 5 Parable of the Certaine Ruler : 15 Ricke seeks explanation 16 Cerebus counsells Ricke to haue patience

A morning was
mee in the
hee spake
unto
2 Seekest thou stronge drinke? And answering unto Cerebus I saide, Whatsoeuer shall bee sufficient unto Cerebus, let it also bee sufficient unto Ricke.
3 Then w wrath and spake unto g, Seeke not the cuppe fr has drunke. Rather, bee owne cuppe.
4 See ment at his rebuke, hee to mee with mildnesse, saying in a parable;
5 There was a certaine ruler, who thot to make himselfe great in the eies of his friend throu es of excedinge drunkenness.
6 And it s that tha this certaine rule himselfe to be a wonder and an astonishment to his friend;
7 Euen so was his friend wroth with him instead and pited him and said inwardly, My friend the certaine ruler who lieth eth him
8 like unto onto the up this
9 ning gred and atri all coul like unto
10 ruler had beene gone away from the certaine ruler many daies, the certaine ruler was shoueling
11 And had made a path eu use, the certaine s owne house and im.
12 And, lo, there came a greate sounde like unto the thunder of many waters and a mountaine (yea, a mountaine upon a mountaine) fell and in falling, sealed up the certaine ruler in his house.
13 And for many daies this certaine ruler had his goings-out and his comings-in through an upper windowe in his house.
14 And I inquired unto Cerebus, saying, Declare unto mee the parable of this certaine ruler and of his friend and of the viper like unto a scorpion hauing a face like unto the backe ende of a dogge.
16 And Cerebus answered mee, saying, Verily, thou shalt not drinke from the cuppe from which Cerebus drinkes until thou knowest the meaning of this. Until then, thou shalt drinke from thine owne


STILL NOTHING DOING.
(AND THAT WAS ABOUT AS EVIL AS CEREBUS COULD GET WITHOUT MAKING HIMSELF SICK)
SO. THAT LEFT "PLAN "
"PLAN 'M'" OR "PLAN 'Q'" (OR WHATEVER IT WAS) CONSISTED OF POINTING OUT THAT (WHILE FRED WAS) (ADMITTEDLY) (JUST A SEX-CRAZED CRIMINAL DEGENERATE TITTY BAR OWNER) FRED HAD NOTICED THAT IN CHAPTER THREE VERSE FIFTY-TWO THE SEAT OF THE LEFT HAND WAS DESCRIBED AS STANDING (QUOTE) "AT THE CORNER OF THE WEST WALL AND THE SOUTH WALL" WHEN (AS PART OF THE "TABLEUX OF THE GANGTANGLES") IT WAS DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER THREE VERSE FORTY NINE AS (QUOTE) "STANDING BEFORE THE SEAT OF TRUTH" WHEN THE ONLY CORNER "STANDING BEFORE THE SEAT OF TRUTH" WAS THE CORNER OF THE EAST WALL AND THE SOUTH WALL
"PLAN 'WHAT'?" "PLAN 'M'?" "PLAN 'Q'?" (CEREBUS WAS RUNNING OUT OF LETTERS IN A HURRY!)
SO, SPEAKING EX CATHETER (CEREBUS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT EX CATHETER MEANT - IT HAD JUST POPPED INTO HIS HEAD) IN HIS CAPACITY AS A SEX-CRAZED CRIMINAL DEGENERATE TITTY BAR OWNER - FRED FIGURED THAT THAT MEANT THAT THE ENTIRE "BOOK OF RICK" WAS A CLEVER FAKE AND NOT DIVINELY INSPIRED AND THAT (THEREFORE) THE ONLY SENSIBLE THING FOR THE THREE WISE FELLOWS TO DO (UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES) WAS TO GET RID OF THE (HEH-HEH) "SO" "CALLED" "BOOK" "OF" "RICK" AND (WHILE THEY WERE AT IT) ANY "SO" "CALLED" "CEREBUSES" THEY MIGHT FIND TIED TO SOME (YOU KNOW) ALTAR (OR OTHER)

SYNOD!!
SYNOD!
SYNOD!


TO NO ONE'S GREAT SURPRISE (LEAST OF ALL CEREBUS') THE WISE FELLOW SYNOD FOUND CEREBUS' DOCTRINE "FLAWED" AND "HERETICAL" AND DETERMINED THAT THE SEAT OF THE LEFT HAND ITSELF WAS TO BLAME BEING (AS WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE VERSE IN QUESTION) (CHAPTER THREE, VERSE FIFTY TWO) "THE INFINITY SERPENT'S SEAT!"
THUS! BEING "OF ONE SUBSTANCE" (WHATEVER THAT MEANS) WITH THE 'CORRUPTOR OF ALL THE EARTH' SAID SEAT:
THUS! SERVING TO CORRUPT (EVEN) THAT PORTION OF THE BOOK OF RICK DEALING WITH (IF A SEAT CAN EVEN BE SAID TO HAVE A GENDER) (POSSIBLY) HIM (POSSIBLY) HER (POSSIBLY) IT:
THUS! SEEKING TO ESCAPE (POSSIBLY) HIS (POSSIBLY) HER (POSSIBLY) ITS PLACE BEFORE THE SEAT OF TRUTH:
THUS! REINFORCING THAT THE BOOK OF RICK WAS AND IS THE WORD OF TRUTH (OR WHY WOULD THE INFINITY SERPENT'S SEAT TRY TO ESCAPE FROM IT?)
*
(THEY WERE RELIGIOUS NUTS, ALL RIGHT)

SHLEP SHLEP SHLEP SHLEP
?
BY THE WAY....
WHAT DIDDEST THOU UNTO HIS HAIR?
YUH LIKE IT?
I THOAT I'D FLUFF IT UP A .ITTLE...
YOU KNOW... LOIK A HALO!
IT LOOKS AS IF... TWO .ITTLE SHEEPS WENT FER A STROLL ACROSST HIS SCALP
AN' FELL IN!
NYUK NYUK NYUK
SHMEKOW

...continued from cover

the only other time that the last two digits of the issue number match the last two digits of the year in which it was/is published) concerned the fact that I used Michelangelo's statue David for the posture and placement of the Prince Mick figure on the cover. "Dave's Mick, after 'Mick's' David". We actually filmed that cover being done in...8 mm.? . 16 mm.?...time lapse photography. That is, Ger set up the camera pointed at my drawing board and set the timer to shoot a frame every 30 seconds or so. So, I had to lean out of the way every 30 seconds or so, wait for the "click" and then start pencilling and inking again. I wonder whatever happened to that film?

Anyway, this is really going to look like a set-up, Colin, but it was certainly opportune that your letter came in as I was wondering what sort of lead-in I was going to do for the excerpt from the winner of the First Annual Howard Eugene Day Memorial Award.

memoir

HOWARD EUGENE DAY, MENTOR

I first met Gene Day in the summer of 1974, when I stepped off the bus that ran a couple of times a day between Kingston, Ontario and Gene's...very, very.. small hometown of Gananoque (Gateway to the Thousand Islands· one of Canada's more picturesque and renowned tourist attractions). The bus pulled in to a gas station which doubled as the local Grey Coach Terminal—pulled in just long enough to let anyone off who was getting off and let anyone on who was getting on.

I had corresponded with Gene since the previous fall when we had been put in touch with each other by a writer named Augustine Funnell who had recently sold a couple of comic book scripts to the editor of a line of horror comics magazines—a man by the name of Al Hewetson—who edited those magazines from his home in St. Catherines, Ontario. John Balge and I had interviewed Hewetson for the second issue of the Now & Then Times *(copies still available for $5 from Now & Then Books, 90 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 1V9) which I edited and which I talked Now & Then Books owner, Harry Kremer, into publishing. I had gotten Hewetson's name, address and phone number from Vince Marchesano (at the time a very big name in Southern Ontario comic-art circles).* Psycho *and* Nightmare*—later joined by* Scream*—were the titles Hewetson edited for Israel Waldman's Skywald Publishing, second rate knock-off's of Jim Warren's (by 1973) equally second-rate comics horror magazines:* Creepy, Eerie *and* Vampirella. *It was in the pages of the last issue of* Psycho *that I would make my own professional debut as a comic-book scriptwriter a year or so later.*

When you are young and you are hungry and desperate for paying comics work—as we all were in those days—it is by just such circuitous routes and indirect connections that you begin (step by step) to get anywhere. Augustine ("Gus," as he was known in "Gan") had gotten in with Skywald. John Balge and I had interviewed him (for John's *fanzine,* Comic Art News & Reviews*) and he had told us about his friend Gene Day who might be willing to do some spot illos or covers for* "CANAR". *John wrote to Gene and Gene sent down some samples of his work. His samples were really good. So good that I had no problem with being knocked out of my spot as* CANAR's *primary cover artist by him.*

Professional is a highly flexible term. I was a professional insofar as I sold my artwork for money and it was published (each sale duly recorded in my little black and red hardcover notebook reserved for the purpose). That is to say, technically *I was a professional artist, but* only technically. *I was still living at home (or, rather, "living with my mother" as Gene would rather gleefully put it whenever I would get a little too big for my britches) and I wasn't earning nearly enough money to support myself Gene was in a different category altogether—a giant step up from where I was. Gene made enough money—barely, most of the time—to rent the second floor of the house Gus Funnell lived in (although at the time of that first visit Gene slept, as I recall, on the screened-in front porch of his fiancee's mother's house). He paid for most of his own food, his own telephone bill. As I say, a giant step up from where I was.*

"Dave Sim?"

We shook hands as the bus roared off behind me down King Street toward the next tiny Eastern Ontario town, Lansdowne, then Belleville, then the next and the next and the next—all the way up to Montreal. For those who prefer the human side of these stories, let me attempt to describe the man who met me at the gas station/bus station "upstreet".

Gene's was an intimidating presence. He dominated the space he occupied and the area around him as most big men do. We would soon be about the same height (5'9"—I grew about seven inches between dropping out of high school in June of '73 and the summer of '75) but he probably had forty or fifty pounds on me—180 or 190 would be my guess. There was an unmistakeable sense, as we walked along, that he was edging me out of the way—that there wasn't enough sidewalk for both of us. A sense very much belied by his level of interest—keen interest—in anything and everything I had to say. He had what could best described as a "rolling gait," both shoulders hunched, the forearms swinging, swinging in counter-rhythm to his bulldog stride: the stride of a man with places to go and things to do and little patience with impediments of any kind. He had long, long, long straight black hair which fell to the middle of his back and which called

to my mind Conan's hair as depicted on the old Frazetta paperback covers. He was relaxed conversationally, moving easily from topic to topic: relaxed but not relaxing (it was impossible, it seemed, to stay out of the way those swinging forearms) and I remember thinking—briefly—that I had made a mistake coming to visit him. His face was heavy, nearly a perfect oval. A rubbery complexion, as if moulded from smooth plastic—but firm—which made him appear heavyset rather than fat. No facial hair to speak of—stubble on his chin and the corners of his mouth only. An eighteen-year-old notices those things about a twenty-three-year old. It was the only area where I had the advantage over him. Rotten teeth, brown and discoloured and stunted. He told me the story of his teeth, once, years later. Some precursor of "workfare" had involved him in hauling felled trees out in the bush, dragging them to a huge bonfire in minus-40-degree weather. Someone later told him that moving repeatedly from the extreme cold of the surrounding bush to the furnace-like temperatures at the bonfire caused permanent damage to his teeth, killing them from the insides out. Anyway, they caused him no end of trouble and he was forced to limit his diet to soft food. He had been quite the hell-raiser in his welfare days. Lots of drugs. For months (years?) on end his daily diet had consisted of a jug of the cheapest wine they sold at the LCBO and a box of French fries. Finally he had had an attack of the DT's—convinced that he saw a UFO landing right in front of him on the creek that runs through the middle of Gananoque. For years (he told me) he and his friends were hauled in for questioning anytime anything bad happened in town. It was hard to reconcile these stories with the Gene Day I knew and the reaction people had to him on the street. "How are ya?" *With the Eastern Ontario accent which made it sound almost like* "How *air* ya?" How's so-and-so? How's *she getting' on with 'er (whatever it was). Every few feet on the way "upstreet". "Gene!" "Oh, hey.* How are ya?" *Just plain folks. No putting on airs. "WhattzAT?" With me, it's a conversational trick because I used to see how well it "worked" for Gene. Only for Gene it was just part of his genuine interest in people. That and the fact that he was a little deaf. Actually more than a little deaf. So, he would miss a line of the person's story, but he was so interested in what they were saying that he would lean in a little, a big grin breaking out on his face and say, "WhattzAT?" Whoever they were they would just light up. I doubt that most of them had ever been listened to so attentively. I know I hadn't. He was also blind as a bat without his glasses and not exactly an "eagle eye"* with *his glasses* on.

Anyway, to say that he was making up for lost time—the teenage years he had wasted on drugs and alcohol and just basic hell-raising—was an understatement.

That became apparent when we got to his studio and he started pulling out pieces of artwork to show me. At the time, I had only seen the three or four pieces of art he had sent to John Balge and had assumed that they represented, numerically (as they would have in my own case) a substantial chunk of what he had accomplished to that time. Virtually all of his work was drawn on Bristol board, that-glossy-on-one-side-dull-on-the-other Bristol board that we all used at school (and which I had abandoned for "artsier" Mayfair card stocks). And there was a lot of it. I see him, in my mind's eye, crouched down in front of a vertical file, pulling out illustration after illustrations after illustration. A stack of comic strips he hadn't been able to interest anyone in. Full colour strips betraying a Vaughn Bode "Purple Pictography" influence with their balloons floating outside the panels...

[I was going through my own bout with swiping Vaughn Bode's thinking and idiosyncrasies—we were all terribly susceptible to Bode in the mid-70s, thrashing around, looking for regular work, not fitting in. Apart from the high quality of the work itself, Bode didn't fit any known category. He wasn't an "underground" cartoonist like Crumb, but he sure wasn't a Marvel or DC guy either. National Lampoon's *Funny Pages with "Cheech Wizard" every month, his own (not really) "underground" comics and third string skin magazines like* Swank. *If you could make a career out of that—and, clearly, Bode* had*—there was some small hope for all of us]*

....drawings of Robert E. Howard characters· Conan, Bran Mak Morn, Kull, Solomon Kane (a particular favourite of Gene's and the model for Gene's own Stromm Hel Dunn character). Conan was going through one of his periodic renaissances (on the heels of the success of the Roy Thomas-Barry Smith comic-book incarnation which would one day serve as the primary satirical touchstone for the early Cerebus) *and the fanzine world was awash in REH "zines" both amateur and "prozines" (as they were called: paying markets). I learned from Gene the value of doing a Conan picture and then running it around the circle of prozines until someone would agree to pay anywhere from twenty to forty dollars for "one-time" reproduction rights. Shoestring operations all, they paid "on publication" more often than "on acceptance," seldom published more than once or twice a year, and were usually backlogged with eight or ten issues of material "in the drawer," so it was not unusual to wait (literally) years to see your picture in print and to get paid for it.*

. ..covers and illustrations for Gene's own fanzine, Dark Fantasy *(then at around issue 6 or 7) and other proposed/dreamed-about publications slated for his Shadow Press imprint, painstakingly imitative of the professional digest-sized fantasy and science fiction magazines sold (widely, at the time) on newsstands. I say "painstakingly" because this was before the computer revolution in desktop publishing. A small block of "type" on the cover, outlining the contents of a given issue, required each letter (barely an eighth of an inch tall) to be aligned by hand and by sight and then burnished into place from a master sheet of Letraset dry-transfer lettering.*

Looking at that sheer, awe-inspiring volume of work on that first visit, I recognized that Gene was not only a professional *(able to feed himself and provide for himself, solely through his artwork, the basic necessities of life)—but also, at least* potentially, *a* PROFESSIONAL *professional (which, at the time, meant only one thing to all of us· he could, conceivably, get work at Marvel and/or DC in the not-too-distant future).*

I was definitely not in that category—nor was Gene—but he was clearly much closer to the goal than I was. The only real impediment to Gene's breaking in at Marvel (that I could see) was a "cartooniness" to his drawings, a rubbery look that came and went from panel-to-panel and page-to-page—and an inversion of the Jack Kirby Principle of Small Heads and Big Hands to convey Heroic Proportions (Gene's figures tended towards large heads and small bodies and hands) that also came and went from panel-to-panel and page-to-page.

By the end of the visit, I didn't want to leave, didn't want to go home to my parents' basement and my own modest little stack of illustrations and strips that I had just sort of—produced—since dropping out of high school with no idea where they might (even theoretically) be published. That visit was the first major adjustment I made to my focus, recognizing that sheer productivity was an inherently good thing and (so far as I knew) an essential element in making the jump from amateur to professional. For me, it would no longer be enough to just draw a picture or a strip and send it out to some market or other and sit back twiddling my thumbs waiting for it to be returned or a cheque to arrive in the mail.

But, this isn't about me.

Gene got work and then Gene got more work. He hooked up with a publisher who was doing comic-book adaptations of classic literature—and who commissioned Gene to adapt Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Some unbelievably lengthy format (this is going to sound funny coming from me) of 120 pages or something. Pencilled, inked and lettered. The work either never got printed or they never sent him a copy. But he did get paid for it. Getting paid was the priority. Project One—this time written, pencilled, inked and lettered by Gene for an outfit in Chicago. In a reader poll, Gene was rated the number two guy (Jim Craig was number one) at Toronto's short-lived ORB magazine. Gene got quite a bit of work at Star*Reach in Star*Reach and Imagine. It was a story in Imagine—a story about a Samurai Warrior—where the cartooniness and the inversion of the Kirby Principle (suddenly!) vanished from Gene's work and where his brushwork (suddenly!) snapped into crystal clarity—that finally attracted the attention of someone at Marvel. Norman Mailer's phrase, "an eye to the main chance" is applicable. Gene had been hungry, Gene had worked hard and now he had his chance. Unlike everyone else we knew who had "broken in" at Marvel or DC, Gene had no intention of letting (what he saw as) "the main chance" slip away. Marvel wanted Gene as an inker. There is a joke that Gil Kane (may God rest his soul) used to do on panels at conventions about Marvel inkers, pantomiming a puppet with both hands hauled aloft by invisible strings. "And then they slide the page in front of them," he would say and then mime the hands plummeting onto the page and the right hand furiously describing circles and lines and slaps and dashes until, abruptly (a second or two later) the hands would be hauled aloft again. And then the process was repeated. It got a very good laugh anytime I saw Gil perform it.

It also wasn't far from the truth. In the pre-FedEx days, a twenty-two page story, pencilled and lettered, would arrive at the Gananoque Post Office via airmail on a Monday and Gene would be expected to ink it in five or six days. Often another issue arrived while he was still working on the first one. One way or the other, he got them done. It was an amazing thing to behold. In fact, it was believed at Marvel that "Gene Day" was a pseudonym for an art agency (like the "Crusty Bunkers" designation for "gang-inking" done at Neal Adams' Continuity Associates), so reliable was Gene in turning books around, no matter how crushing the deadline. It was actually just Gene and Danny, his younger brother (the same Dan Day who, today, works for Claypool on their licensed title, Elvira). Danny filled in solid blacks (Gene would outline them in ink and put an "x" where he wanted the solid black to go) laid in basic patterns and textures, ruled the straight lines. The rest of it was Gene. 16- and 18-hour days were the rule and not the exception. As I say, it was something to behold. In addition, Gene still produced his political cartoon "Cap'n Riverrat" for the local weekly paper The Gananoque Reporter in exchange for free photocopying. He was also still corresponding and talking on the phone with all of the Dark Fantasy contributors: Charles Saunders, Joe Erslavas, me, Tim Hammel, still making slow progress on Pigeons From Hell, a Robert E. Howard short story for which he had acquired the rights from the Howard Estate to adapt into comic-book form and which he intended to self-publish as a graphic novel. But mostly, from morning 'til night, he inked Marvel Comics. He got a steady gig inking Mike Zeck on Shang Chi, Master of Kung Fu (which was still being written by Doug Moench "based on the characters created by Sax Rohmer" in his Fu Manchu stories). It had been a fan favourite when drawn by Paul Gulacy (isolated issues and then a memorable run, issues 42 to 50)—but had since fallen to a completely marginal status and was verging on cancellation (selling somewhere around 80,000 copies an issue: in this day and age, a mega-hit). Master of Kung Fu suited Gene just fine with its pulp flavour, exotic locations and adventure motifs. He got on like a house-on-fire with Moench and Zeck and loved working on Zeck's pencils. Then, Mike Zeck quit. That left Marvel with no Master of Kung Fu penciller and, of course, since it was such a marginal book, no one wanted to do it. There were no royalties to be had and it was a monthly title so it was a back-breaking job. They offered it to Gene. Not because they wanted Gene to do it especially, but because Zeck had left, it was a monthly title and every day that went by that someone (ANYone) wasn't turning in pencilled pages was another day that the title was late. Or, rather, later, since it had been taking all the running Doug and Mike and Gene could muster just to keep from slipping further behind.

Even though Gene was a much slower penciller than he was an inker (much slower), and would, therefore, be taking a dramatic cut in pay right at the time that he needed every penny he could lay his hands on to pay The Mortgage on the big, old Victorian house he had bought on First Street—he took the assignment. Loyalty is "bred-in-the-bone" in the Scots who built the small towns of Eastern Ontario and, in the small towns of Eastern Ontario, loyalty is a two-way street.

Marvel cheques paid The Mortgage and so (loyalty demanded) what Marvel wanted from Gene, Marvel got from Gene to the best of Gene's abilities.

It was, unquestionably, a thing to behold when Gene began to apply the lion's share of those prodigious abilities to the task at hand. Now, instead of piles of pencilled and lettered pages scattered across the old kitchen table next to his drawing board, there were blank pages with pieces of tracing paper of various sizes and shapes and (overlapping) configurations taped to the pages at different angles—big figures, little figures, faces, buildings, statues, locomotives, period cars, .45 automatics (accurate in every detail)—"pencilled-side-down," ready to be transferred to the page by Danny tracing over them and then returned to Gene to be tightened-up into finished pencils.

No inking. Not yet. The pages first had to make a return trip to New York so they could be approved, editorially, then lettered, then returned to Gananoque for inking. Easily (easily!) *a week of working time lost out of that brutal monthly schedule.*

Doug Moench was a prince, in all this. "What do you want to draw?" He would tailor the story to Gene's pencilling strengths, the things Gene had confidence in. East Indian statues. I remember the East Indian statues. Bas relief panels. A definite motif that Gene seized on, Doug played to. The book really started to click. Sales started going up as Gene edged over into his own "take" on Steranko's style. He didn't have Paul Gulacy's facility with the human figure and he knew that, but he had a nearly super-human design sense and he knew how to spot blacks like nobody's business. And he could tell a story; move your eye from panel to panel and then BAM hit you in the face with a display shot when you turned the page. He was amused talking with me on the phone one night.

"It's 'Have a Cigar' time," he laughed, referring to the Pink Floyd song

People at Marvel were taking notice and suddenly everyone wanted to fiddle with Master of Kung Fu *now that sales were going up. Everyone wanted to make changes so they might be able to steal some credit for the success ("It could be made into a monster/if we all pull together as a team"). Gene laughed. But, I knew it wasn't funny. I suspected it was going to get a whole lot less funny. And it did.*

[As tends to happen, a warning about misplaced loyalty arrived in Gene's life in the winter of 1981-82 during a particularly severe cold snap that blanketed much of Ontario, Quebec and the north-eastern U.S. Right in the middle of struggling to maintain his brutal schedule on Master of Kung Fu, *Gene was summoned to Marvel's New York offices as an emergency inker; an eight- or ten-page story needed to be inked over a weekend. Gene had a lifelong fear of flying so he had to take the train east to Montreal and then south through Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and finally into Manhattan—and "hit the ground" inking on arrival. Whatever Marvel wanted, Marvel got. They put him up at a hotel that proved to be roach-infested. He asked to be given a different hotel (not substantially* better *but, you know, not roach-infested). The editor, who will remain nameless (it wasn't Jim Shooter, by the way) told him he could sleep on one of the two-seater couches in Marvel's reception area. Whatever Marvel wanted, Marvel got. He slept on the couch with his coat pulled over him...in a Madison Avenue office building where they turned off the heat at night...in the middle of a severe cold snap. He developed an infection in his kidneys, as a result, which would cause him almost as much pain as his teeth did for the rest of his life. He finished the inking job over the weekend and went home.]*

Meanwhile, on Master of Kung Fu, *as the sudden sales spurt continued to attract editorial attentions, Gene ran afoul of many of Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter's Rules of Good Comic-Book Storytelling. "No continuous backgrounds" was a big one (that is, no pages where a single background ran across two or three panels: a cornerstone of Steranko's storytelling). Loyalty isn't the only attribute of a Scot. There's also stubbornness. Gene was part of a hit—or, at least, a book whose sales were going up, a book that was being talked about. He must have known that that success could only be attributed to his storytelling since that was the only thing that had changed (he could never say that, of course—not even to himself—his natural modesty, his self-effacing Eastern Ontario nature would forbid it). But, there was another way to make his point. He did a sequence that ran across four or five pages.*

One. Continuous. Background.

That, of course, led to The Phone Calls: Knock off the continuous backgrounds, said Shooter. Get them Coloured Properly, replied Gene (Shooter had told the colourist to use different colours on the backgrounds in the different panels, so a continuous wall changed from mauve to red to yellow. Unbeknownst to Gene, the colourist was Shooter's long-time girlfriend) (oops, as they say).

It was an unhappy situation. Shooter called the shots. He was the Editor-in-Chief It was his job to call the shots. Gene was a freelancer. It was his job to do as he was told. Shooter told him that Archie Goodwin found his work unreadable That hurt. Big time. I knew Archie quite well by then, so I called him. No. He didn't find Gene's work unreadable. Shooter had brought the continuous background pages to him and asked him if he found them unreadable and Archie had said, no. They were a little more difficult to follow than a typical page, but he could read them with no problem. I phoned Gene to relay the word. He was relieved to hear it, of course, but the relief was temporary. At that point, that was all any of us could provide for Gene: temporary relief. It was between Gene Day and Jim Shooter and there was no doubt how it was going to end. Not in my mind. Not, I suspect, in the mind of anyone who was privy to the conflict. Gene got the axe. Got work at DC right away. Dick Giordano snatched him up to do Batman *(a guy who can do Steranko-style graphics and storytelling, pencilling and inking, on a monthly schedule? What, is this a trick question?). From an Industry standpoint it was, unquestionably, a promotion, or rather a Promotion—from a marginal book at*

Marvel to the top book at DC. But not for Gene. Gene wasn't a DC fan. Gene was a Marvel fan. The House That Jack Built. Marvel had picked him and Gene had vowed never to let them down and was on the verge of delivering a hit for them. The way it ended, for Gene, wasn't so much "wrong," as it was "inexplicable". If sales were going up, why not let him do what he wanted until sales went back down? The wrenching "downshifting" out of the 16- and 18-hour days took its toll, no question. But it wasn't just *the 16- and 18-hour days and it wasn't just the downshifting...*

There are things that happen...

There are. Things. That. Happen...

. .which, spiritually, can just cut some vital part right out of you, some vital part that is as necessary to sustain life as is blood, as is oxygen. And that, I believe, is what happened with Gene getting fired off of Master of Kung Fu. *He had a regular check-up with his doctor in mid-September of 1982. Apart from the lingering effects of his kidney infection, he was given a clean bill of health. A week later, September 23, 1982—coincidentally, his brother Danny's birthday—out for a walk in the neighbourhood around the First Street house, he collapsed and died of a heart attack.*

At the age of thirty-one.

****

"Jim Shooter did not kill Gene Day," said the Marvel spokesman—before anyone had even had the chance to ask a question—at the weekly "news conference" they used to hold for various New York-area fanzines and their correspondents. And that's really all that was ever said, apart from Archie Goodwin's wonderful tribute in Epic Magazine *and my own in. .*The Comics Journal*? .* The Comics Buyer's Guide*?...I don't remember, offhand. What else could be said? Embarking, as I was, on the first national tour of comic-book stores a week later, I was certainly in a position to say something, but what? Gene had made his own choices all along, choices that had put him on a collision course with his boss. To the day he died, his loyalty to Marvel remained unshakeable. To me, loyalty to Gene meant respecting that loyalty—both in the immediate aftermath of his death and for the ensuing (as it turns out) nearly two decades—even though I saw that loyalty (then) and see that loyalty (now) as having been wholly and completely misplaced.*

"It was a Shame."

Many depths of meaning descended through the noun which ended that simple sentence, allowing me to express what I truly thought—while also allowing a largely disinterested industry, and the company at which it was directed, to take (because of my loyalty to Gene and his memory) the surface meaning only. Yes. "It was a Shame."

All of us who knew Gene, who respected and admired the man and his work, who had worked with him and had watched his talent hatch out into something remarkable, exhibiting the first glittering promise of many gems to come—me, Danny, Doug Moench, Archie Goodwin, Mike Zeck, Mike Friedrich, a handful of others—separated geographically, stunned, disbelieving but, alas, still just a mere handful of individuals, caught between the rock of the industry consensus and the hard place of our own loyalty to Gene, would have to content ourselves with that.

Yes. Jim Shooter did not kill Gene Day. Yes. It was a Shame.

****

In a perfect world—in what I would consider to be a perfect world—Gene Day's adaptation of Robert E. Howard's Pigeons from Hell *enters its record-breaking thirtieth printing this year. Still the flagship volume in the extensive and ever-expanding backlist of Gene's own Shadow Press (which occupies a quarter-page in the Star System catalogue), it will soon be joined by the first printing of his latest effort, two years in the making, as all of us head up to "Gan" to salute him on his 50th birthday: August 13, 2001.*

****

Ladies and Gentlemen
It gives me great pleasure to introduce this excerpt from
The recipient of
The First Annual
Howard Eugene Day Memorial Award:

FAITH: A FABLE
By Bill Knapp

CARBON-BASED BOOKS, 1270 Jackson Ave., Lakewood, Ohio, 44107 bknapp1 @ juno.com http://www.carbonbasedbooks.com (ten dollars and twenty-five cents)

SHADOW PRESS

The Day Prize recipient for 2001

A FEW DAYS LATER.
I'M TELLING YOU, BETTY, IT WAS THE MOST AMAZING THING I EVER SAW.
IT WAS JUST LIKE THOSE "PSYCHIC FRIENDS" COMMERCIALS. SHE WAS TELLING ME THINGS ABOUT MY LIFE THAT NOBODY KNOWS BUT ME!
OH, GO ON!
NO, REALLY!
SHE KNEW MY YOUNGEST, YOU KNOW, MARCIA, THE ONE WHO LIVES IN BOULDER, WAS PREGNANT.
MARCIA JUST CALLED TWO DAYS AGO AND TOLD ME!
SHE'S THE ONE THAT'S NOT MARRIED YET, ISN'T SHE?
AND SHE ALSO KNEW ABOUT EARL'S HIP REPLACEMENT COMING UP.
YOU KNOW, I'VE NEVER BELIEVED IN ALL THAT "PSYCHIC" NONSENSE.
IT'S MORE THAN THAT
THAT LITTLE GIRL MADE ME FEEL BETTER.
I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING VERY WELL THE CLOSER EARL'S SURGERY GETS.
LAST NIGHT, I DIDN'T WAKE UP ONCE.
THE NERVOUSNESS AND WORRY AREN'T THERE
I REALLY FEEL BETTER FOR HAVING TALKED TO HER.
HM. MAYBE I'LL STOP BY AND SEE HER
WHAT'S THIS GIRL'S NAME?
LORI BRANYAN. TOM'S LITTLE GIRL.
WHY DOES THAT NAME SOUND FAMILIAR?

Faith: A Fable by Bill Knapp

THE NEXT AFTERNOON.
JIMMY! C'MERE!
GOOD T' SEE YOU, ROY
MAN, IT MUST BE, WHAT, SIX MONTHS SINCE I'VE SEEN YOU?
S' BEEN AWHILE
HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
A LOT BETTER ..ATELY
AFTER, YOU KNOW, BRENDA.. AH DIED, I WASN'T DOIN TOO MUCH.
YEAH.. YEAH, PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE
I WAS OUT FOR A WALK A COUPLE WEEKS AGO, JUST HAD T' GET OUTTA THE HOUSE
I PASSED A GIRL WALKIN' IN THE OTHER DIRECTION
SHE STARTED TALKIN' T' ME AN, BEFORE I KNEW WHAT HAPPPENED, I'M TELLIN' HER ALL ABOUT ME AN BRENDA AN' HOW MUCH I MISS HER
I COULDN'T TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT SHE SAID..
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FELT THAT EVERYTHING WAS GONNA BE AWRIGHT
SHE GAVE ME HOPE AND I COULD FEEL BRENDA RIGHT THERE WITH ME..
TELLIN ME IT WAS OKAY T' GO ON
YOU MEAN SOME KID TELLS YOU EVERYTHING'S OKAY AND THAT'S ALL IT TOOK?
NAW, IT'S MORE N' THAT
I STILL GO THROUGH SOME ROUGH PATCHES
BUT I FEEL NOW I CAN LIVE WITH LOSING HER..
'CUZ THE TIME WE HAD WAS SO SPECIAL.

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I GOTTA GET GOIN 'LL COME BACK LATER ON, OK?
SURE HEY, DO YOU REMEMBER HER NAME?
LINDA. NO, LORI. THAT'S IT, LORI
D'YA KNOW HER?
NO, BUT I KEEP RUNNING INTO PEOPLE WHO DO.
THERE'S MORE OF A STORY HERE THAN JUST AN ADOLESCENT ANN LANDERS.
SO FAR THREE DIFFERENT PEOPLE ..
HAVE GIVEN ME THREE DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS OF THIS YOUNG GIRL
ADVISOR..
PSYCHIC..
AND HEALER.
THIS BEARS SOME LOOKING INTO.
IT DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TO FIND OUT WHERE LORI BRANYAN LIVED GETTING THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER
HER FAMILY LIVED IN ONE OF THOSE REMOTE, HILLSIDE HOMES SITUATED AT THE END OF A RUTTED DIRT ROAD
JUST THE KIND OF TERRAIN FOR WHICH FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES WERE REALLY INVENTED.
UNFORTUNATELY, I OWN A CIVIC.
WHEN I BOUGHT IT, THE SALESMAN TOLD ME THE SKINNY TIRES ACTUALLY SERVE TO "KNIFE" THROUGH SNOW AND MUD MUCH BETTER THAN WIDE, "BLUNT" TIRES.
BASTARD.
US MAIL
CIVIC
OF COURSE, I BOUGHT THE CAR.

Faith: A Fable by Bill Knapp

HI, MRS. BRANYAN? I'M ROY WESTERLEY FROM THE "REGISTER". I SPOKE TO YOU EARLIER ABOUT TALKING W TH YOUR DAUGHTER
OH, YES! DO COME IN.
TOM, THIS S MR. WESTERLEY FROM THE NEWSPAPER.
HE WANTS TO SPEAK TO LORI.
DONE ANYTHING WRONG...?
OH, NO NOTHING LIKE THAT
BEFORE I TALK TO HER, COULD I ASK YOU TWO A COUPLE QUESTIONS?
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.
IN THE PAST WEEK, I'VE COME ACROSS THREE PEOPLE WHO EACH UNDERWENT A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE
IN ALL THREE CASES..
THIS EXPERIENCE CONSISTED OF A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR DAUGHTER.
YOU DON'T SAY!
THIS DOESN'T SOUND UNUSUAL TO YOU?
SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD LISTENER
THERE HAS TO BE MORE TO IT THAN THAT.
FROM THE ACCOUNTS I'VE GOTTEN, SHE'S MANAGED TO SAY JUST THE RIGHT THING TO SET ARIGHT..
PEOPLE FACING A MAJOR CRISIS IN THEIR LIVES.
A TWELVE-YEAR OLD GIRL!
WE'VE TRIED TO RAISE OUR DAUGHTER TO USE THE SENSE GOD GAVE HER TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS.
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SHE'S JUST EXERCISING THAT SENSE AND HELPING PEOPLE OUT

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I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT
PEOPLE HAVE A WAY OF READING INTO AN INNOCENT REMARK...
WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR
YOU'LL SEE SHE'S JUST A NORMAL GIRL
LORI!! COULD YOU COME HERE, PLEASE!
LORI, THIS IS MR WESTERLEY FROM THE PAPER
HE CAME HERE TO TALK TO YOU
HI
HI, LORI.
C'MON, MR WESTERLEY
I'M CUTTING UP VEGGIES FOR DINNER AND YOU CAN HELP.
GO ON AHEAD
LORI, YOU JUST MAKE SURE MR. WESTERLEY DOESN'T DO YOUR CHORES FOR YOU
I KNOW, DAD
I DID THE CARROTS ALREADY, BUT YOU CAN PEEL THE POTATOES...
WHILE I CUT UP SOME CELERY.
UH, SURE

Faith: A Fable by Bill Knapp

A FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME HE SPOKE TO YOU A COUPLE WEEKS AGO.
I BET YOU MEAN JIMMY.
YES.
HE LOOKED BETTER THAN I'D SEEN HIM LOOK IN A YEAR.
I'M GLAD.
HE'S A NICE MAN.
I COULD TELL HE LOVED HIS WIFE AN AWFUL LOT.
HE JUST HAD TO SEE THAT GETTING ON WITH HIS LIFE...
DIDN'T MEAN HE HAD TO FORGET HER.
THAT'S ALL?
PRETTY MUCH.
WE JUST TALKED.
I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT ABOUT.
BUT AFTERWARDS, WHEN I LEFT HIM, HE SEEMED... BETTER.
BETTER, HON?
LIKE A WEIGHT CAME OFF OF HIM.
LIKE HAVING SOMEONE TELL HIM IT WAS OKAY WAS WHAT HE'D BEEN WAITING TO HEAR.
KOFF KOFF
EXCUSE ME!
YOU SHOULD REALLY QUIT SMOKING.
EVEN I KNOW IT'S NOT GOOD FOR YOU.

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YEAH, WELL...
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE TALK TO YOU?
HOW MUCH YOUR WORDS HAVE CHANGED THEIR LIVES?
ALL I'M DOING IS LISTENING.
MY MOM SAYS I'M A GOOD LISTENER.
TO BE HONEST, I'VE NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
DON'T MISUNDERSTAND, I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW THIS WORKS, MYSELF.
BUT, JIMMY MUST HAVE GOTTEN THAT SAME ADVICE FROM THIRTY PEOPLE...
EACH OF WHOM HAVE KNOWN HIM FOR YEARS.
I KNOW I'VE TOLD HIM THAT.
WHY DIDN'T OUR WORDS HAVE THAT EFFECT?
MAYBE THEY DID.
MAYBE HE WAS FINALLY READY TO HEAR SOMEBODY SAY IT.
IF THIS WAS A ONE-TIME THING...
I'D BE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH YOU...
BUT OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS...
I KEEP COMING ACROSS PEOPLE WHO'VE TALKED TO YOU...
AND SAID HOW YOU CHANGED THEIR LIVES.
ALL I DO IS TALK TO PEOPLE AND LISTEN TO WHAT THEY TELL ME.
MAYBE IT'S 'CUZ I'M REALLY LISTENING TO WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...
INSTEAD OF TELLING THEM WHAT I THINK THEY SHOULD DO.

Faith: A Fable by Bill Knapp

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I EXPECTED HER TO TELL ME.
I SUPPOSE I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DEBUNK.
IF SHE'D COME RIGHT OUT AND SAID SHE WAS READING THEIR AURAS OR SOMETHING...
I'D AT LEAST HAVE AN AVENUE TO HEAD DOWN.
ALL I COULD DO WAS SAY MY GOODBYES...
AND LEAVE WITH AN UNSATISFIED FEELING IN THE BACK OF MY MIND.
AS FAR AS I COULD SEE, THERE WASN'T A STORY. THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME SORT OF HUMAN-INTEREST ANGLE TO IT, BUT AS A NEWSPAPER PIECE, IT DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH OF ANYTHING TO WARRENT THE COLUMN INCHES.
A FEW WEEKS WENT BY, WHICH WAS ENOUGH TIME TO ALLOW ME TO FORGET ALL ABOUT IT. ESPECIALLY WITH SUMMER FINALLY ARRIVED.
THIS IS WAY TOO NICE A DAY TO BE TRAPPED IN HERE!
REGISTER
SOON AS DORIS GETS BACK...
AH...ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.
SO, DORIS, HOW GOES THE GOSSIP GANG DOWN AT MILLIE'S?
YOU ASK ME THE SAME QUESTION EVERY WEEK, ROY...
AND EVERY WEEK I TELL YOU I'M GETTING MY HAIR DONE, NOT SITTING AROUND GOSSIPING.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THOUGH...
BESS BARKER TOLD ME SOMETHING YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING.
OH?

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